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Dimension

# DIMENSION

## THEOLOGY IN CHURCH AND WORLD

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

VOLUME ~~I~~ 3 • SPRING 1966 • NUMBER 1

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# DIMENSION:
# THEOLOGY IN CHURCH AND WORLD

Volume ~~I~~ 3 Spring 1966 Number 1

J. Randall Nichols, *Editor*

Dimension is a theological journal whose contents comprise student academic works submitted in seminary courses during each semester of the year. Any such work is eligible for consideration, and may be submitted independently by the author or upon recommendation of the instructor for whom the work was done. Papers selected for publication are those which in the judgment of the instructor and the editorial staff show originality, intellectual promise, and significance of theological insight. Dimension represents the best of Princeton Theological Seminary student "theology in church and world."

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# DIMENSION

THEOLOGY IN CHURCH AND WORLD

VOLUME ~~1~~ 3 · SPRING 1966 · NUMBER 1

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# President's Introduction

Dimension is a journal of research and opinion published by the students of Princeton Theological Seminary. Its purpose, as the title implies, is to measure out the length, breadth, height, and depth of the human situation in the light of biblical faith. Such an undertaking is ambitious and involves an endless quest, but it is one that is consonant with a community established to engage in theological inquiry. Seminaries exist to reflect on the meaning of the gospel and its relation to man in every area of his existence and struggle.

The articles included in this number indicate the nature of the problems facing theology and the church today. They have to do with the meaning of existence, the possibility of communication when old symbols and concepts have lost their power, and man's tortuous quest for identity amid the complexities of modern society. And how to reach man across this gulf through preaching is perhaps the most agonizing question of all for men and women who are called to be heralds of God.

That seminarians from the moment they reach campus as Juniors begin to wrestle seriously with these problems makes theological education today an exciting venture. Their work in these papers reflects a theology that has emerged from the security of scholastic categories to become once again a servant to man in his struggle for maturity and meaning.

James I. McCord, *President*
*Princeton Theological Seminary*

# EDITORIAL

## IN WHAT DIMENSION?

This first issue of DIMENSION marks the beginning of an experiment in theological education, a first answer to the question of theological students: What have I really done worthwhile? Let the reader recall some of the good and original ideas he has had in the past: whatever became of them? Were they ever tested and refined publicly? Were they ever synthesized into something larger and more useful than a single paper or random comment? To the extent we are obliged to say No, to the extent we are saddened and frustrated by the premature deaths of all our children of the mind, to that extent there has been a need of some expressive medium for thoughts too good to be forgotten in a file, but not yet ready for professional journals and wide academic consumption. DIMENSION is conceived as a half-way house between strictly "academic" and soon forgotten course work, and the still too distant professional recognition afforded by books and learned professional journals.

The hopeful premise on which we are operating is that there is first-rate theology being written by students in theological seminary. Our aim is to present the best of that work, done in the regular course of theological education, and selected upon recommendation by professors who have recognized germinal studies holding intellectual promise. No article in DIMENSION has been especially written for the journal; each has been thoughtfully recommended for publication by a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary. Here is our modest answer to the troubling question, What have I done worthwhile? This is not make-believe theology, or "student opinion." It is theology at its point of origin, the theological student at serious work.

Two recurring features are noticeable in these articles. Perhaps they may cautiously be taken as indicative of a contemporary mood of theological study. First is the ease with which the authors have utilized new theological concepts, models, and works in the construction of their own theological edifices. Curious contemporary theological tools —tradition history biblical interpretation, "non-religious" theological language, the "God is dead" critique of cultural theology, situational ethics—which are still held by many as anomalous and a little dangerous are here *used*, appropriated as working instruments, by theological students. There is no sensational or faddish theology here: it is solid and growing, but encouragingly facile in its use of new devices.

Second is the markedly practical and eclectic orientation of what is still called philosophical and systematic theology. What we have often been wont to criticize as a modernist craze for "relevance" is here taken seriously and maturely as a norm for modern theology. Even the sermons, which are not to be taken as models of homiletics, are imaginative attempts to reproduce in the pulpit some of the contemporary and practical mood which seems to prevail in the classroom.

That duality of interest and activity which the cover's double eagle symbolizes is the guiding editorial desideratum of DIMENSION. Any of several dichotomies can express it: ancient and modern, scholar and preacher, word and sacrament, theoretical and practical, or first and twentieth centuries. The double eagle, like the Roman Janus, sees two dimensions in every glance. So too, we hope, will the theological student see himself and his calling in the two dimensions of intellectual, scholarly work, and practical, pastoral ministry. Each needs the other. For the increasingly practical American theology represented in microcosm here a respectable theoretical undergirding is needed. But we are now more than ever aware that undergirding alone is insufficient for the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The preacher in the parish must be a scholar, as much as the professor must be a pastor.

That is not to say—nor should it—that this "parish theology" is conclusive, dogmatic, or even very systematic. Indeed, some have noted that unprecedented numbers of theological students these days are exploring for the first time the boundaries of their faith and commitment: they are not mending their evangelical walls so much as building them. There is less surety, more openness, and a professional skepticism of the suitability of today's formulations for tomorrow's needs. Unlike his opposite numbers in the other professions, the theological student today is training for a ministry the nature of which he cannot fully see or predict. That his evangelical calling is nevertheless optimistic and daring speaks well for the liveliness of his faith. If a measure of all this—call it mood, or vocational *Sitz im Leben*—is conveyed in the following pages, we will be well pleased.

I cannot resist the temptation to close this introduction with a personal story. A few years ago a three-year-old critic of mine was told by his parents that I was going to be a minister. This information raced along the circuitry of his keen little mind, and he said in reply, "Oh, so Randy is going to turn into a minister? And when he is through being a minister, will he turn back into Randy?" This insight into the dynamics of conversion applies equally to the business of being a theological student. We do not turn from one thing into another, my little friend, neither from who we are into ministers, nor from students into theologians, nor from theologians into pastors. Our task and our judgment is rather to be both at once, all things to all men for the sake of the gospel, perhaps. We may have to reckon with two dimensions in every glance, but we are one observer. May God grant that we observe and speak the truth of his Christ.

J. Randall Nichols
Editor, Dimension

# NON-RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPEL

## Some Preliminary Considerations

BY ANTHONY L. HITE

WHEN one breaks in upon the vigorous debate now in progress over the notion of a "non-religious interpretation of biblical concepts"[1] he is astounded by the complex of interrelated theological and methodological questions which are being raised and examined, and by the almost incredible sophistication of the dialogue. The present discussion takes its cue from Ludwig Wittgenstein and his desire to deal with primitive reconstructions of highly complex philosophical phenomena.[2] We shall seek to ferret out some basic features of the problem of non-religious interpretation and to consider these basic features in as simple a form as is possible while, at the same time, striving to do justice to their very real complexity. The present discussion should be viewed as a series of questions designed to provide some tools with which to navigate the stormy waters of the so-called "new theology." We turn first to some features of the setting in which the problem of non-religious biblical interpretation finds itself.

## I

The phrase, "the non-religious interpretation of biblical terminology" has its origin in the theological reflections of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who writes from prison, "The thing that was coming back to me is, what is Christianity, and indeed who is Christ for us today?"[3] Paul Van Buren asks fundamentally the same question. "The question is this: How may a Christian who is himself a secular man understand the gospel in a secular way?"[4]

✠ ANTHONY L. HITE is a Middler candidate for the Bachelor of Divinity degree. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1964.

[1] See, for example, Robert Funk, "Colloquium on Hermeneutics," *Theology Today*, October, 1964.

[2] *Philosophical Investigations* (Tr. G. E. M. Anscombe; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953), paras. 1-15 provide an example.

[3] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (Ed. E. Bethge; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953), p. 162.

[4] Paul Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1963), p. xiv.

There is, of course, an assumption operating behind both questions, an assumption often overlooked in the heat of debate, which simply put is that there *is* a gospel, a message; there is Jesus the Christ; and there is also an understanding of the significance of this gospel (for Bonhoeffer) and even of what the *words* mean (for Van Buren). Because the world is as it is, understanding becomes problematical; *but* there is something which may be understood even if in a way which is problematical. Or, to use Paul Lehmann's polar construction, there is soteriology which must be linked to intelligibility.[5] Gerhard Ebeling poses the problematical relation between "Christian faith and religion."[6] In other words, all these men seem to be struggling with a "something," a "given" to which, as Lehmann puts it, they are trying to "give the shape of words."[7] These men desire to communicate the truth of the Christian message in a world which no longer finds the old forms of communication intelligible or interesting. But we must not overlook a fundamental distinction: There are those who are in touch with something which they are attempting to make intelligible in terms which others who are not in touch with the "something" will find intelligible.[8]

To be a secular man who is also a Christian, however difficult it may be to understand what "Christian" means as a self-designation, is to be something different from just a secular man; it is to see oneself in one's secularity differently than the other secular people do. Reality is reality as experienced and verbalized, and it includes concerns (being-exercised) which are experienced and verbalized by secular Christian men and not by secular men who do not profess Christian faith. All this is ground work for what I hope will be the successful blurring of the distinction between religious and non-religious, a necessary step, I think, in advancing toward a communicable Christianity. Other preliminary steps must also be taken, including some questions directed to the problems of transcendence and religious language. Three things are at issue: (1) the idea of transcendence; (2) the distinction between "religious" and "non-religious"; and (3) the notion of a "form of life," which is basic to the question of any language, including theological language. All three are related questions.

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[5] Paul Lehmann, "The Logos in the World Come of Age," *Theology Today*, October, 1964.

[6] *Word and Faith* (Tr. J. W. Leitch; Philadelphia: The Fortress Press, 1963), pp. 135ff.

[7] Lehmann, *op. cit.*

[8] I do not want to imply that those who desire to communicate find what they desire to communicate fully intelligible—this is obviously not the case. But the *differentia* lies in the fact that the theologian is concerned, convicted, driven, exercised or what have you by something which he has encountered and which he believes the rest of the world ought to encounter but, as yet, has not. And those who have not been so "encountered" are not so "exercised."

## II

Paul Lehmann is concerned with a fundamental feature of our contemporary cultural landscape, the question of transcendence. His statement of the problem is worthy of a lengthy quotation:

> The effective absence of God from the world in which we live and labor is due not to God's actual absence but to the effective breakdown of the language and the sense for transcendence, that is, for that adequate distance from the world across which God's relation to the world and his active presence in the world can be discerned and understood. This means that the original question of the relation between Gospel and *logos* is still lurking about somewhere in the wings waiting upon a promising occasion to "zero in." The difference between a world come of age and a world initially surprised by the advent of the *logos* is that in a world come of age the *logos* must create new conditions for the experience and apprehension of transcendence, not merely correct conditions already at hand. This is a new experience for the *logos* which does not make the *logos* any less a new experience for the world.[9]

This creative work in which, as Lehmann sees it, the *logos* engages, coupled with the author's hypotheses regarding "apperceptive conditions" and "apperception," provide much light in which we shall consider the notion of a "form of life." By apperception, I take it Lehmann means a process by which one understands something new in terms of that which is already familiar to him. The task of theology, then, "in giving the shape of words to the Gospel," is to create apperceptive conditions suitable for a meaningful response to the divine self-communication.[10] Firstly, Lehmann maintains that apperceptive conditions no longer allow for an assumption about the world as God's handiwork; the language and sense for the transcendent have disappeared. Secondly, quoting Bonhoeffer, Lehmann raises the point that, in the divine self-communication in Jesus, the *logos* of man, and perforce, the apperceptive conditions of his world, are called into question, judged, and killed.[11] What must be recaptured is the sense

[9] Lehmann, p. 280.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 278, 283.

that the advent of the gospel in Jesus has changed "the face of reality" and that it must create apperceptive conditions whereby reality as changed may be apprehended in a new way.

It seems that certain attitudes attach to the use of the word "transcendent," some of which Lehmann (and Bonhoeffer) want to uphold and clarify and some of which both agree are impossible and destructive to maintain. The idea that beyond human perception and understanding there exists a "something" which we can pull into our sphere of reality so as to stop up the gaps in our understanding is abhorrent to secular mentality. Yet, it seems to me both men want to suggest that any talk about the reality which does present itself to secular man will be unacceptable talk if, in some way, it does not include mention of God, who is not to be identified with what presents itself to our senses (empirically). Even if you want to say that God has pulled out of the world, you are speaking of more than just the world. All Bonhoeffer's talk about recognizing our maturity ("world come of age") is talk about our situation vis-à-vis God, and means we must deal creatively with the "transcendent," not dismiss it.

Talk about the transcendent is no longer talk about what can be apprehended only with reference to *God*; it is talk about apprehending reality, *realiter*! Consider a story about "sense data" and "reality." You are standing on a corner and into your field of vision moves an object (car) from which protrudes an object (arm). Shortly after this occurrence the object (car) changes direction with respect to your position. The foregoing was a description of sense data as perceived. (I have "reconstructed" such data as round objects on which rests one complex of objects, e.g., body, etc.) But in what way is this a description of an "event"? Something more than is "given" by perceiving the sense data is necessary to make this a description of the latter variety, i.e., a description of a car making a turn and a driver giving a signal. Something beyond the physical "data" is "seen," i.e., understood. Given all the problems about sense data vis-à-vis Jesus (historicity of the occurrences), I take it most Christians, even the most secularized, will grant that we have such data. Any man who is honest will seek—if you ask him—to make sense of this data. That is, he will try to render an account of the data, an account which will be more than the data alone. But an account (or better, perhaps, an explanation) is called for when something which is present becomes puzzling. Puzzles are to be solved, and a solution is designed to fit something puzzling into the realm of the familiar, the realm of things which are not puzzling. An account is not some other "thing" (from "beyond" or from anywhere else). A satisfactory account is one which will not be so puzzling as to leave a person not knowing what to do about a thing which "is taken account of." It will not leave one wondering what to do or think in relation to what called forth the account.

Now what Lehmann might be taken as saying, on the basis of the notion of an account, is this: The *logos* is beyond us in that Jesus provides a puzzle. We cannot look to the familiar as conditions under which we could render an account of the *logos* because the familiar is no longer to be regarded as familiar. God's effective "absence from the world" is due to the fact that we sought to account for his presence in terms of the familiar which led to his no longer being a puzzle. We somehow forgot that the familiar was to be regarded as not familiar. We did account for his presence, and familiarity bred a special kind of contempt. There was a puzzle which was intended to remain a puzzle. You could say it this way: There is a reason for holding the door of reality open, for not letting an end be put at either end. To close the door would be to put a top on the "Tower of Babel" (Van Leeuwen).

Conditions in which something "beyond" (understood in non-spatial terms) can be apprehended for what it intends to do in our reality must, it seems to me, include a willingness to be puzzled about Jesus of Nazareth with regard to his place in traditional talk about God. Yet at the same time we must be willing to decide on courses of action in compliance with the intention of that which can be apprehended as "beyond," as that intention becomes clear in the context of the mundane. To say of a man, "He has a sense for the transcendent," ought to be saying of him that he has an attitude of willingness in the sense I have described above. In this connection we must turn now to something Van Buren has said about religious language, and to the question of a "form of life."

## III

Van Buren, in *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, allows some statements of the New Testament writers (and similar statements made by theologians and commentators) to go as meaningful without possibility of verification. These statements are designed to do something; they function as imperatives.[12] There are other statements, however, no less vital to the sense of the gospel message, which even though empirical are not open to verification and are therefore not open to sense. These are empirical claims about what is in the real, observable world. And because their logic, but not their subjects, is empirical they are so confusing as to be unintelligible.[13] The thing to which Van Buren objects is that the imperative statements are grounded in the indicative (empirical) statements. Thus, we are to act in such and such a way because something is in fact the case about the world, e.g., Jesus has been raised from the dead. The author speaks, for instance, about a voyager on a ship who sees the first officer looking very upset and yelling, "Fire!" Van Buren allows that the utterance could be viewed as an imperative (that is, "Get off the ship!"), but he wants to say one would likely verify the claim before taking any action on the basis of it. Van Buren is concerned to show that secular man wants to be sure about the things upon which he bases his most important decisions. Secular man wants explanations of things upon which he bases decisions to be explanations which will give him sufficient confidence to stay with his decision.

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[12] See *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, pp. 13-14, and 68-70 for good examples.

R. M. Hare, in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*,[14] sheds light on a side of the question which seems to have escaped Van Buren's attention. Hare speaks of having a *blik* about the world, by which he means an attitude which will not change regardless of what one observes to happen in the world. He says, moreover, that no explanation of any puzzle is possible, let alone a satisfactory account, without a *blik*. And (as Hume has shown) "no proof could be given to make us adopt one *blik* rather than another. . . ."[15] Of course, Bonhoeffer would object that the things which characterize one kind of *blik*—about which he speaks in terms of his analysis of religiousness—are precisely the kinds of things which cannot be held by secular man who currently holds to a *blik* which is antithetical to these things. The kind of *blik* currently in vogue does not seem to admit trust in the empirical statements with which Van Buren is concerned. Bonhoeffer is concerned not to require a man to hold one before or as a requirement for having faith.[16]

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[13] By verification I think Van Buren and most others who speak to this point mean putting oneself in a position to know whether or not something is the case. The employment of optical, auditory, tactile, etc. receptors, and mechanical amplification of these sense organs is fundamental to an act of verification. And even if the historical validity of the empirical statements of the New Testament could be shown to be indubitable, the factual reference to the statements, the things to which they refer (the God and father of Jesus, say) are still open to questions of verification.

[14] R. M. Hare, *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (London: SCM Press, Cheap Edition, 1963), pp. 101ff.

[15] *Ibid.*

What is intended by Bonhoeffer is that in no way should one be called upon to perform works—which must include conceptual gyrations—in order to *merit* faith. The "willingness" spoken of in section I above must not be viewed as a requirement for "getting" faith, but as a description of one's attitude toward reality when he has faith. What I want to ask is whether or not a *blik* may be characterized in such a way as to be intelligible to one who does not have the *blik*. This question amounts to a step away from the question of non-religious interpretation, and toward an interpretation of what goes into a *blik* which is concerned with the problem of making sense of the gospel and which will stick with the gospel to the end.

You could put it another way. What makes it possible for Christians who are secular to speak about God—when they are not discussing the problems which attach to speaking thus—and to feel they are making sense, at least insofar as they are concerned? Many secular Christians are finding that their language of God is at least meaningful to them when they use it with people who do not profess Christian faith. Van Buren, for example, has taken up work in a secular institution (Temple University) because he believes the "religious question" (whatever he means by that) is being heard "out there" in society and not in the ecclesiastical context.[17] Lehmann hears the soteriological question being raised in the arts and politics.[18] Religious questions are being heard in non-religious contexts. How, then, are these queries seen as *religious* questions? It *could* be said right off that what the Christian hears he translates into another language; but this will not bear fruit without something more. Insofar as the *blik* from which the questions are asked has a connection with the one in which the translation occurs—that is, insofar as there are features common to both *bliks*—communication between them can occur.

How is this communication seen? Harvey Cox in *The Secular City*, for instance, speaks about observable social phenomena in a way which makes sense to sociologists and other scientists of human behavior. He speaks of certain developments in contemporary society which can be accounted for without reference to the God-hypothesis.[19] Yet, he is saying that it is also possible to speak of God as being active in these developments, and that one who is concerned about the Gospel ought to work out his Christian commitment by involving himself in the problems of urban society in such a way as to make it more human. And "human" is best seen as it *ought* to be in Jesus of Nazareth. True humanity is the creation of God, yet it is to be understood and described without reference to "God." There you have an "interpenetration" of *bliks*.

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[16] See Ebeling's superb discussion of this theme in *Word and Faith*, pp. 134ff.

[17] Paul Van Buren, "Theology in the Context of Culture," *The Christian Century*, April 7, 1965, p. 429.

[18] Lehmann, p. 280.

There seems to be an interpretation of what may be observed which seeks to show that no room need be made for God because God is already here and has been all along. Yet one does not want to say, "You can see *him* in what is going on," because one wants also to say, "God stands over against what is going on." Maybe it would be best to be silent and simply to participate in what is going on. But the Christian's participation is supposed to take a certain shape—even if the shape is identical to that of non-Christian participation—and the Christian will say the shape conforms to the will of God made known in Jesus Christ. The theological formulation of what the shape of the participation should be may always be tentative, but the theologian believes there must be such a formulation.

This concern to make such a formulation is part of the *blik* of the Christian which marks off his *blik* from that of the non-Christian. There is an essential connection between the desire to talk of faith as obedience to the will of God (regardless of the changing formulations) and the conviction that the world must understand the action of the Christian as precisely this: obedience to the will of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Doing something in the world is not enough if you happen to hold a Christian *blik*, even a secular Christian *blik*. There goes with the doing the attempt to make sense of what is being done with reference to a dimension of reality which the Christian believes to exist but which, when all is said and done, he has grave difficulty in understanding. This drive to attempt explanation, as I have said, is part of the Christian *blik*; but whence the *blik*? With this question we move to the notion of a "form of life," a notion which is central in dealing with the problematic character of religious language and with the distinction between religiousness and non-religiousness.

[19] Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965).

## IV

We have already asked how it is that Christians seem to make sense to themselves when they speak about God, etc. Even if, after all, you seek to translate from one idiom to another so as to make it easy for modern man to "get the message," you assume the old idiom to be saying something which is intelligible to *you*. How is this to be understood? As Wittgenstein suggests, the meaning of a word—and, therefore, a language—is its use by the majority of persons who use the language. If you want to know the meaning of the word X which you have heard, you do not necessarily go looking for a something, an entity for which X is a name. You ask the people who are using X to tell you what its use can be expected to do among the people who use it. If X *is* used as a name, then the people (the majority of the people) who use it—when it is uttered—will picture the something for which X is a name, or they will focus attention upon an X if there is one present. X in such a case would function as an empirical reference. But one will only be able to be sure of how it functions if one gets with the people who use X in their conversation, and only as one uses it and notes whether people approve of one's use will he be able to be sure of the meaning of X.

Wittgenstein says, therefore, that you have to participate in a form of life before its language will be your language, and you do not go checking out the furniture of the earth or reading dials to see whether you are using the language correctly. The question is, are you getting on with the majority of the community? So, for example, if you say "I believe in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," certain criteria are operative in the community by application of which the community will know whether you are a believer or not. These criteria are not strictly behavioral in the sense that, if you *do* something, then whether you believe it or not, you are a believer. You must do certain things—and what these are will depend upon the current formulation of the will of God—but you must also see what you are doing as "obeying the will of God." You must hold a *blik*, not because you cannot have faith until you hold it (a merit, a grasping of faith by one's own hand), but because neither you nor anyone else will understand what you mean by having faith and by talking about it unless you hold the *blik* which derives from your "form of life."

Theological language—which may include what Bonhoeffer would call "religious" *and* "non-religious" statements—grows out of a form of life which has been created by the *logos* (Lehmann). Insofar as the language used by Christians involves empirical statements, the problem of verification still obtains. Even when the objects referred to by empirical statements are visible to all men (social phenomena, for example) they are said to possess a special character which is spoken of in empirical type statements, i.e., they are observable results of God's action however indirectly he has acted (Van Leeuwen). Such a claim cannot be verified in any scientific or even ordinary sense in which we use "verify." Yet, the Christian is willing to base his account of his action in the world upon such statements, and this kind of willingness is not so different from that of the scientist who acts on an hypothesis. The statements still go as warrants for doing something, for acting. It does not pay to say that, with theological-empirical statements, one has no way of knowing what would count as verification.

There is to be seen here the essential connection between thought and action of which Bonhoeffer speaks in "Thoughts on the Baptism of DWR."[20] The essential connection of theology and mission is the warp and woof of the form of life in which theological language does make sense. With this in mind I want to return, in conclusion, to the matter of section III above, the question of religious and non-religious as a distinction which I think is dogmatically relevant but linguistically confusing.

It is at this point that Ebeling's discussion of religious and non-religious as themes in Bonhoeffer's thought is indispensable.[21] Ebeling sees that the non-religious is related to the religious by means of its connection with the "existentialist condition" which took the form of religion in former days, but which, as Bonhoeffer sees it, must take the form of the non-religious in the world come of age. Bonhoeffer speaks of religious as a primitive or historically conditioned mode of human self-expression. The religious versus non-religious distinction does not really make any sense to me, however, in light of the fact that something more fundamental than either religion or non-religion is spoken of as being expressed in religious or non-religious ways. What I have tried to suggest is that the fundamental reality could be the *blik,* the basic attitudinal set; and I do not think it is necessary to raise the spectre of a *theologia naturalis* in order to account for a *blik.* Statements of faith can be doubted; no special mental machinery for proving such faith-claims could have come as standard equipment for pre-fall man. The real question is always how far you will trust the statements as claims on which to act, as warrants for an act of obedience, even though you do not fully understand "obedience" in this context, and even if the statements look non-sensical.

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[20] *Letters and Papers,* pp. 179ff.

[21] *Word and Faith,* pp. 134ff.

Something has happened to people who profess faith, and as they continue to express and define faith by pointing to what it looks and feels like in action, other people join in the form of life and begin to speak the language.

# ETHICS AND ESCHATOLOGY

## A Comparison of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Oscar Cullmann

BY WILLIAM A. McGAUGHY

THE primary purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast the theological views of Oscar Cullmann and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as they relate to the problem of Christian ethics. The two main sources to be used for this study are Cullmann's book, *Christ and Time,* and parts of Bonhoeffer's *Ethics,* especially the latter's discussion of the ultimate and penultimate, or "the last things and the things before the last" (chapter IV in the paperback edition).

The conclusion which initiated this study was that both of these writers speak of the Christian as one who lives in the midst of a dialectic tension between the difficulties of knowing the good and doing it in this present age of ethical ambiguity, and of believing the promise that God is Lord over all and that his will shall be fulfilled in spite of man's sinful nature. In the broadest sense, this tension forces the Christian to take seriously the problems of ethics (or the determination of wherein lies the good) in the light of both theodicy and the promise of the fulfillment of all creation according to the will of God.

Cullmann describes this tension as that which results from the recognition that man lives in the present age, yet he has a foretaste of what is to come in Christ, or of the future age. We have this foretaste because of the good news proclaimed by Christ almost 2,000 years ago. This tension is therefore experienced in the arena of time—past, present, and future—and it is Cullmann's main intent to explore the primitive Christian conception of time as revealed to us in the Bible. Yet as he states in his preface, the whole conception of time is subservient to the broader concern of time as salvation-history, and he emphasizes that his study is neither a new philosophy of history,

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nor a study of that abstraction we call time, "but with the presentation of the biblical redemptive history."[1]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes this same dialectic tension as that which exists between the penultimate and the ultimate. Bonhoeffer's ethical formulations are based on this tension which exists between what the reality of the present now dictates, and what the promise of the gospel means for the man who is justified by the grace of God in Christ. The tension itself is quite similar to that which Cullmann discusses, but simple comparison cannot illustrate this tension. What must be noted here is that the primary difference between these two descriptions of this dialectic tension is that Cullmann understands it in the context of time, or eschatology, while Bonhoeffer understands it as that which results from the faith of the Christian and the demands of the secular world.

Cullmann is expressly concerned with analyzing the biblical view of redemptive history as seen in the context of time, and any discussion of Christian ethics is secondary. Bonhoeffer on the other hand is asking the question of ethics, of man's responsibility in the light of the demands of the Christian gospel. He is asking the question, "Wherein lies the good for man who is come of age" and any hint at eschatology is secondary. The thesis of this paper is that, in spite of some important disagreements, these two writers agree in their conclusions about Christian ethics, and moreover, both approaches are needed if the Christian is to understand fully the demands of the gospel as they relate to Christian ethics.

## I

Cullmann's concept of man in eschatological tension between the present age and the future age is itself filled with ethical implications. But before these implications are delineated one must first understand what Cullmann means by the redemptive line of history and its relation to the mid-point of history, i.e., the Christian event.

According to Cullmann, the biblical writers viewed history in terms of a linear conception of time which begins at creation and culminates with the last judgment. This is set in contrast to the Hellenistic spatial conception of time here and beyond. In Greek thought the "here" is the "now," the current time, and the "beyond" is seen as a timeless eternity. The conception of life after death, insofar as it existed, was life spatially removed from the present world, and its realm was existence without time, history, or movement. Life in this world was seen as evil, and the reward after death was to escape from this world of evil. Present life and life after death were mutually exclusive entities. The biblical view, on the other hand, was conceived in a linear fashion of formerly, now, and then.[2]

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[1] Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. xvi.

The concept of such a linear view bears heavily on the New Testament understanding of eternity. For Greek thought, eternity was spatially removed from the present world, and was timeless. Eternity never began and will never end. It is not bound by time as the present creation now is. In the Christian view, however, eternity is a temporal concept. In fact, the Greek word *aiōn* is used to mean "age" or "eternity." The fundamental difference, however, is that while the present age is bounded by God's act of creation and his decisive act of the last judgment, eternity is seen as unlimited time, time without an end. As opposed to *kairos*, a point in time, *aiōn* is seen as a duration of time. The present *aiōn* is limited, so to speak, on both sides of the time span, while the coming *aiōn* is bound only on one side, only by the last judgment which is its beginning. The significant point to be noted here is that all of God's work of salvation and redemption is to take place in the context of time, during the present *aiōn*, which includes and is terminated by the final judgment. Thus also, all revelation occurs in the context of time. It is not, as popular imagery has it, the power of heaven (God) breaking into the present age from the outside. The final judgment of God would not inaugurate a new age; rather the coming age would begin with a decisive *kairos* which would mean the salvation and judgment of the present *aiōn*. Time would then be divided, but it would still be the same kind of time. The only difference, and a very fundamental difference it would be, is that when this eschatological *kairos* occurs, time would no longer be bound; it would be endless time.

For the Old Testament writers this *kairos* would occur when the promised Messiah would come and restore Israel. At his coming, the new age would begin and the law would be fulfilled. But when the

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[2] It conceived of history as a moving forward from promise to fulfillment. Cullmann is careful not to use the word "progression," for this implies the conception of liberal theology that as history moved forward, the creation was progressively moving toward its fulfillment, and that sin was gradually being overcome. This mode of thought is foreign to the New Testament, for its writers believed the fulfillment of the creation would only come by God's decisive judging act, not by whatever improvement man would make ethically or morally. If the word "progression" is ever implied, the only meaning it has is "movement forward in time."

Messiah did come he was not recognized by the Jews partially because he did not bring the present age to an end, nor did he restore Israel to God as they had expected him to. Rather, Christ brought a different kind of *aiōn*, in which the promise was partially fulfilled, but not completely so. He still talked of what was yet to come. For this reason, among others, he was mistaken for Elijah or one of the prophets. In short, Christ brought a new division in time. The New Testament view of history, though still a linear view, looked somewhat different from the Old Testament conception. For the Christian, for the man justified by Christ, the present age is that period of time which exists between the two decisive *kairoi* of the mid-point and the last judgment. It is with the coming of Christ that man was fully justified by God. Yet Christ did not abolish the evil of the present age. He instead required that man should proclaim that his salvation could be found in Christ, for it was Christ who by his love and obedience unto death forgave man for the evil of the age. He required that man should overcome the evil of the world, and receive salvation. But even more important for our discussion of eschatology is that Christ said he would come again, and at this time (*kairos*) the new age of endless time (*aiōn*) would be inaugurated.

Yet the present age for the Christian also contains within it a foretaste of what is to come. The Christian is to live and work for the coming age, the promise of hope, which at the same time affirms and nullifies the present age. It affirms the present age, for it is in the present that we must witness to the glory which has been won in Christ. This hope also affirms the present age in that it is here that we must witness to the fact that Christ still lives and reigns, and that through him we are justified. And this hope affirms the present age in that it is here that we must, as Bonhoeffer would put it, "prepare the way" for the final consummation. On the other hand, this hope nullifies the present age in that it declares it impermanent. The present age exists in time as does the future age, but it is bound by the hope of the Parousia, and therefore it is temporary.

The present age, i.e., the *aiōn* which is between the resurrection and the Parousia, thus derives its orientation from the mid-point, or the Christ event, and its hope from the promise of the consummation of time. Undue emphasis on either the past stage of history or the future stage would distort the New Testament view of the tension which exists in this present age. Yet in terms of the future stage, the tension is not created by the hope alone. It is created primarily by the fact that today the Lord lives, and that because of the ministry of Christ, man in the present age is now partaking of the life of the coming age. The future age is not only that which will come, it is also that which has come. As Cullmann put it, the question which forms the basis of our ethics is not "In what way does our salvation depend upon that which is to come?" but "In what relation does the future stand to that which already has been done for our salvation?"[3]

The theodicy question which now arises is, "If the consummation of time has begun in Christ, what does the Gospel have to say about the evil of the present age?" If God is a loving God, and an all-powerful God, why does evil exist? Cullmann attempts to answer this question in terms of the relation between the state and redemptive history. He first affirms that the linear view of history, and the tension involved therein, is redemptive precisely because the Bible affirms God's lordship over time, and in fact over the entire creation. The invisible powers (Rom. 13) are a part of creation, as is all the evil in this present age. But Cullmann's conclusion is that the power of the *invisibilia* is, in the final analysis, only an apparent power. This does not mean that the individual has no part in redemptive history, however. Because the evil of this world is temporary, the Christian has all the more reason to stand firmly against it to prove to the world that its force and effect is only temporary.

In short, the state is a divinely ordained institution, and must therefore be served as such even though it may appear evil. Because God is the Lord of creation, everything in creation must be honored as such, and seen in the context of redemptive history. This is true, Cullmann maintains, especially when these powers violate what the Christian believes to be truly good.

Yet it would be false to speak of such "world affirmation" as the dominant view of the New Testament. A tension in the world view exists between denial and affirmation, and such a complex view can only be understood in the light of the greater tension between the present and coming ages, between the "already fulfilled" and the "not yet fulfilled."

It is in the context of this tension that Cullmann finds the basis for Christian ethics. The Christian must adopt what he calls an "interim ethic" which remembers that any present determination of the good remains temporary; the ethical system will be judged and will pass away, just as all creation will.[4]

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[3] Cullmann, p. 140.

The proclamation of the biblical view of redemptive history is essential to one's understanding of the entire New Testament, but it will mean nothing unless the individual sees himself as an integral part of it. Just as the present age is anchored in the past and directed toward the future, so also is the individual. The Christ-event will not be understood as a decisive inclusion into history, unless the individual is able to see its decisiveness in terms of his own salvation, unless he is able to say "Christ died for *me.*" Likewise, the present and future ages must be seen in this light, and the individual Christian must be able to say "Christ lives for *me,*" and "Christ will reign throughout the ages, that I might have hope."[5]

For Cullmann, redemptive history becomes personal through justification by grace. Justification is

> nothing but the application of the redemptive process to the individual. It shows how the individual man is decisively affected in his individual life by what occurred in past time. *The connecting link is faith.*[6]

Faith in the New Testament sense, according to Cullmann, is the conviction that the individual is chosen to be an "active fellow-bearer of the redemptive process, and in view of this role he belongs to the past phase of redemptive history; *it is his own past.*"[7]

By the same token, it is this conviction that commands us to be about the task of witnessing and preaching in the current phase of time. The command to proclaim the word is fully determined by the mid-point. All "ought" rests here upon an "is." The imperative is firmly anchored in the indicative.[8]

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[4] Bonhoeffer would agree that the tension between world affirmation and world denial is one of the most complex problems to be dealt with in Christian ethics. This is seen in the delicate balance he constructs between the radical and compromise solutions to the problem of the relation of the ultimate to the penultimate. The radical position emphasizes eschatology to the degree that it denies the present age, and the compromise solution does the opposite. I am not so sure that Bonhoeffer would therefore describe Christian ethics as "interim ethics." This word "interim" seems to imply that because this age is temporary, the ethics of this age are in reality not a serious problem.

[5] In this way Cullmann moves from the cosmic scope of history to the individual, from the abstract to the personal. It is interesting that Bonhoeffer's approach to ethics is just the opposite; he moves from the fact of individual salvation to the cosmic realm, from justification of the individual to its larger ethical implications.

[6] Cullmann, p. 219.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 221.

Cullmann goes on to say that because the present is seen as an intermediate period, the Christian church should not establish general ethical commandments which would be absolute in all similar situations. Ethical decisions can only be made in the context of the particular concrete situation, and "on the basis of the knowledge concerning the event at the mid-point."[9] From this orientation, one can determine what the present lordship of Christ means, and the goal toward which the redemptive process is moving.

Yet Cullmann makes it clear that the New Testament ethic is not entirely relative to the concrete situation. The mid-point of history remains only a point of orientation, as does the promise of fulfillment. What determines the "goodness" of a particular decision is the Holy Spirit which shows itself when it tests the faith of man. Thus the one absolute in the midst of the relative and ambiguous ethical situation is the love of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit. "Certainty of moral judgment in the concrete case is in the last analysis the one great fruit that the Holy Spirit, this factor in redemptive history, produces in the individual man."[10]

## II

Christian ethics for Bonhoeffer as for Cullmann cannot be understood as an abstract system or remote set of general rules, but must be determined in the context of the concrete situation. Moreover, the good must be understood as the will of God. The problem for the Christian is determining what the will of God is in a given concrete situation. Cullmann's conclusion that the will of God will be revealed by the Holy Spirit is inadequate for Bonhoeffer because the problem still remains as to how to perceive that which is being revealed by the Holy Spirit.

For this reason Bonhoeffer first speaks of ethics as formation, or better still as conformation, of man into the body of Christ. The result of this conformation is the new man who is sentenced by God, who carries with himself God's judgment on sin, yet who lives for the greater glory of God. The new man lives in the midst of the old; and as man conforms to Christ, he is life in the midst of death. He is man born anew, that he may live as the crucified and risen Christ.

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 224. Bonhoeffer, on the other hand, would say that our command to proclaim the word comes from the fact that we have been justified by grace, a phrase which must be further defined. Suffice it now to say that Cullmann's mid-point and Bonhoeffer's concept of justification are different concepts, but which still result in the salvation of the individual. They differ temporally, but not soteriologically.

[9] Cullmann, p. 225.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 228.

This conformation serves as the basis for Bonhoeffer's ethical system. In the new body of Christ, ethics become distinctively "Christian ethics." "The point of departure for Christian Ethics is the body of Christ, the form of Christ in the form of the Church, and the formation of the Church in conformity with the form of Christ."[11] Such formation is that which the church calls reconciliation, the reconciliation which was already accomplished in and by our crucified and risen Lord. It is in this reconciliation that the sinner is justified. The wounds inflicted by guilt are healed. The guilt will still exist, and will not be justified, but with justification man is no longer torn apart and disunited by his guilt. He is forgiven and made whole even though he still lives in the midst of a sinful world. This word of justification, reconciliation and forgiveness is the good news we are called to proclaim.[12]

The complete transformation of the individual which results from justification is final, in that "the totality of life is encompassed in this event."[13] The past and future are, at this moment, compressed into the existential experience of justification by grace. Because justification is final, it is implied that past and future no longer have a temporal connotation. The past is nullified, and future becomes an ethical conception in that it is concerned with obedience, with doing the good, which is another way of saying the future is seen as doing the will of God. Justification is therefore historical only in the sense that it is based on the reconciliation provided by the historical Jesus. It is not historical in the sense that Cullmann used the word "historical," i.e., part of the line of redemptive history. Nor is it cosmological. It is only seen as an individual, existential concept. It has its foundation in Christ, but this foundation is "outside myself."[14] It is a foundation which is eternal and holy. Justification, therefore, seems to come from on high in the sense of an inbreaking of the eternal into the temporal.

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[11] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics,* p. 84.

[12] These two words, reconciliation and forgiveness, are apparently interchangeable in Bonhoeffer's terminology, and they all serve to describe man's conformation to the body of Christ.

[13] *Ibid.,* p. 120.

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 121.

Cullmann objects to this conception, for justification should be seen as the fulfillment of the law, just as the primitive church saw it. Eternity is not a spatial, but a temporal concept; not timeless, but endless time. More specifically in relation to ethics, Cullmann sees the ethical indicative as resulting from a fact of history, viz., the midpoint, while the imperative comes when one realizes that Christ died for him. Bonhoeffer, however, understands the indicative and the imperative to occur simultaneously at the moment of justification.

Bonhoeffer goes on to say that the word of justification is final, or ultimate, in two respects: in the qualitative sense and the temporal sense. It is final in the qualitative sense in that it is the last word; nothing more can be added. When a man is justified, he becomes a part of the ultimate. The past, if it ever was a temporal concept, has been cut off, and at this point time seems to hang in a state of limbo. Thus for Bonhoeffer, the individual life, once justified, appears to be entirely non-temporal, even though he still lives within the context of the temporal world.

This ultimate word is also final in the sense of time. It stands at the end of time, and judges all that has preceded it. The justified man is one who is the object of an accusation in time. But the primary difference is that for Bonhoeffer, time ceases with the ultimate word, while for Cullmann, the last judgment inaugurates a period of endless time.

Though the ultimate is not the culmination of time as the last judgment is for Cullmann, it occurs in the context of time. What Bonhoeffer seems to be saying here is that the ultimate is the final word, yet it does not place man into the ultimate in a spatial or temporal sense, for man still lives in the penultimate. But by saying justification is the final word Bonhoeffer leaves no room for the end of the cosmos or the last judgment. The question that is begged here is, What happens to the justified man at death?

The question is, In what sense is the ultimate an existential concept, and in what sense is it an eschatological concept, or are the two concepts synonymous? If the ultimate word is all that is needed for faith, then it must be both an existential experience and an eschatological concept. If it is not, then the ultimate is strictly existential, related to the present span of time, whether that span be the current moment or the present age. (But as soon as one talks of the present age, he is presupposing an eschatological framework.) Our only conclusion can be that the ultimate must be simultaneously existential and eschatological.

The question does not occur for Cullmann because justification is not seen separately from the historical event of the mid-point. Justification is nothing more than the application of the mid-point to the life and faith of the individual. Our Lord's act in the death and resurrection of Christ is both "once" and "once-for-all."[15] This is the very reason the Christ-event was so decisive, both historically and personally. And this is why Christian ethics can have as its total orientation the mid-point of history.

The point is that if Bonhoeffer had understood the ultimate word in the light of redemptive history, the troubling question of ethics and eschatology need never have been asked. On the other hand, Bonhoeffer enables his readers to see that, in terms of Christian experience, justification is much more than Cullmann has described. The ultimate word just does not seem all that ultimate if it is a concept which can be applied to man on the basis of historical understanding. It comes dangerously close to implying that a man is not justified until he first understands redemptive history as Cullmann understands it!

The result of these digressive speculations is that although both of these men approach the matter of justification quite differently, their conclusions are similar. If we are correct in assuming this ultimate word is, for Bonhoeffer, both eschatological and existential, the Christ-event for both men is essential to one's departure for Christian ethics. And it is in part the thesis of this paper that both approaches are necessary for an adequate doctrine of justification by grace through faith.

The questions which now must be asked are, What relation does Bonhoeffer's concept of justification have to Christian ethics? Does this ultimate word inherently contain a new orientation to the problem of ethics? In other words, is the justified Christian enabled to arrive at a different set of answers to the problems of ethics than the man who is not justified?

Because of the tension between the penultimate and the ultimate, it appears certain that no set of categorical answers can be derived from the fact of justification, either for the sake of ethics or for the sake of the above questions. But this ultimate word does carry with it some definite implications for the penultimate. The justified man must work to preserve the "natural," or that which is "directed towards the coming of Christ."[16] He must honor the penultimate, for though it is temporary, it is ordained by God, that in it and through it, the way can be prepared. In this context, the ultimate can refer either to the point in time when the individual is justified, or the point when the eschatological ultimate is realized for the entire cosmos.

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[15] Cullmann, p. 123.

Before the above are more fully dealt with, the relation between the penultimate and ultimate should be discussed. Here again, although the approach is radically different, both Bonhoeffer and Cullmann come to similar conclusions.

Bonhoeffer cites two extreme solutions to this relationship, viz., the radical and the compromise. They are both extreme because they both treat the penultimate and ultimate as mutually exclusive entities. The radical solution stresses the ultimate to the degree that the penultimate is disparaged. The compromise solution does the exact opposite. In the former, the end is regarded as absolute; in the latter, the penultimate is absolutized. "Thus creation and redemption, time and eternity confront one another in a conflict which cannot be resolved."[17] The only valid way to avoid this conflict is to treat both the ultimate and the penultimate, both creation and redemption, both time and eternity as "the reality of God and the reality of man which became one in Jesus Christ."[18]

Cullmann's point on this matter is that these extremes would not arise for man if he would see eschatology in the light of redemptive history, and in the faith which demands that Christ be understood as the lord of *all* time, both ultimate and penultimate. Cullmann maintains that our chief object of concern should be the present, where our primary task is the proclaiming of the word of grace, even though the future hope of the consummation of time has lost none of its intensity.

Thus even though Bonhoeffer implies, and Cullmann disagrees, that the ultimate word is in a sense an invasion into time, both theologians agree that the distinctive concern of Christianity is the tension of the two ages in which the justified man lives. And this is the same tension which is revealed by the Reformation doctrine of *simul justis et peccator.*

By remaining somewhat vague on the nature of the ultimate, i.e., whether it is primarily existential or eschatological, Bonhoeffer is enabled to describe this dialectical tension very graphically. He writes that the penultimate is all that precedes the ultimate, all that precedes the final justification of the sinner. This definition can mean that the penultimate can be all that which precedes the sinner's confrontation and judgment by the grace of Christ. It can also mean all that which precedes the final consummation and fulfillment of time in which the Christian will take part. Here again it appears that these two aspects are synonymous. The tension is created when man understands the penultimate as that which is "at the same time everything which follows the ultimate and *yet again precedes it.*"[19] If the ultimate were confined to the existential event of justification, the "once" of the vertical intrusion, one would be tempted to fall back on the compromise solution, justifying the penultimate as of permanent value, and stressing only the incarnation of Christ and ignoring the import of the crucifixion and resurrection. By the same token, if justification were only conceived of as eschatological, if it were only a future concept which is to come at the end of all time, one would be taking the radical solution, and stressing the crucifixion and resurrection at the expense of the miracle of the incarnation. Thus a balance between the two must be achieved and the resulting tension understood before the ethical question can be asked. It is at this point that Cullmann and Bonhoeffer most fully agree.

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[16] Bonhoeffer, p. 126.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

[18] *Ibid.*

Thus because the penultimate must end and must be judged, it cannot determine the ultimate, just as for Cullmann the present age does not determine the future age. The ultimate passes judgment on all that precedes it. This means that it is not the incarnation or the teachings of Jesus which alone explain the crucifixion and resurrection. They both forecast what is to come, but they do not explain or interpret it. Rather the converse is true. It was the crucifixion and resurrection which interpreted the incarnation and teachings of Christ. Thus for Cullmann Easter became the mid-point.

But at this point the parallel between Bonhoeffer and Cullmann appears to end, for Bonhoeffer does not explicitly identify Easter with the ultimate. If he did, and the penultimate (viz., the Old Testament) was all that preceded this ultimate, then Bonhoeffer would have support from the biblical concept of redemptive history. But for Bonhoeffer, the historical event, the mid-point, has no credence apart from the existential act of justification.

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[19] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

Thus for Bonhoeffer, eschatology and ethics cannot be separated, because the experience of justification precedes both and relates to both. A truer statement would be that Bonhoeffer's primary concern is to describe the Christian experience of justification, and from this departure to develop the implications of this experience as they relate to Christian ethics and eschatology. The primary stumbling block which still remains is that it is difficult, from the biblical point of view at least, to discuss eschatology apart from the context of the line of redemptive history.[20]

## III

We must now return to the questions asked above concerning the relationship in Bonhoeffer's thought between the ultimate word of justification and Christian ethics. It is clear that the fact of justification *per se* does not dictate a given system of ethics. Both Bonhoeffer and Cullmann agree that a given ethical decision can only be made in the context of the concrete situation. Further, although it does not appear that there is a direct cause-and-effect relationship between justification and Christian ethics, yet these two areas are obviously not separate and unrelated. But Bonhoeffer does not say positively what the relationship between the two areas actually is. The relationship which does exist can only be derived by implication.

The "departure for Christian ethics is the body of Christ."[21] Herein lies the best clue for determining the relationship. Underlying Bonhoeffer's system of ethics is the assumption that one cannot know what the body of Christ means apart from the experience of justification. Without first knowing who Christ was and is, one cannot know what it is either to "be man" or "be good." Without knowing of the sentence and the grace which God gives to man in Christ, man cannot know the distinction between the natural and the unnatural; he cannot know what it is that is or is not directed toward the coming of Christ. This assumption is a safe one, especially if his readers already know what this business of justification by grace through faith is all about. And it is this assumption which leads us to the paradoxical conclusion that there can be no such thing as a system of Christian ethics in the penultimate (in fact there can be no penultimate) unless the ultimate has already become a part of the penultimate.

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[20] Yet to be fair it must be said that Bonhoeffer is not so completely existential that he denies the historicity of the Christ-event. In fact he has strongly opposed the Bultmannian school on this matter. The justified man has a historical heritage in Christ, and in fact all that preceded him in the Old Testament, which he must protect and respect for the sake of the coming ultimate. And "it is only by reference to the Lord who is to come, that we can know what it is to be man, and what it is to be good" (Bonhoeffer, p. 139). But the problem which still remains is that Bonhoeffer does not show the relation this view has with the rest of his theology.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

But the implications of this connection may run against the grain of Reformation orthodoxy. Calvin, for one, went to great lengths to make distinct the concepts of justification and sanctification. The former is the decisive action by God's grace which grants man freedom from the bonds of sin. (Sin, of course, is not necessarily a moral category.) Sanctification is that which must follow as a result of this freedom, and impels one to respond to God's will. Sanctification is the category that has distinct moral and ethical overtones which demand that one respond to the will of God. It is not the experience of God's grace *per se* as much as it is the way which one attempts to follow in fulfilling God's will. Bonhoeffer fails to make this distinction adequately. Justification is, so it seems, closely linked, perhaps identical to, the preparing of the way.

Cullmann goes a bit further with the ethical implications of redemptive history than does Bonhoeffer, although he does not deal with the concept of sanctification specifically. He writes that the Christian's ethical imperatives are drawn from and based upon the imperative, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God has come near." Then he goes on to say that the fulfillment of the times is connected with ethics through the working of love. It is this principle of love, a concept which Bonhoeffer does not develop in the context of justification, that anchors the imperative into the indicative.

The ethical ambiguity of the present age must be understood in the context of the dialectical tension which exists between the promise which we have received in Christ, and the promise which is to be fulfilled in Christ. Both Bonhoeffer and Cullmann recognize this tension as basic to the problem of human existence. To be sure, neither attempts to resolve it, not only because it is impossible to resolve but also because both suggest that the resulting ambiguity of this tension can be constructive if the hope of fulfillment is kept alive. Bonhoeffer succinctly summarizes the whole idea when he says,

> Only the triumphal entry of the Lord will bring with it the fulfill-

ment of manhood and goodness . . . It is because Christ is coming that we must be men and that we must be good. For Christ is not coming to hell, but to "His own" (John 1:11); He is coming to His creation which, in spite of its fall, is His creation.[22]

What must be done, therefore, is to fortify the penultimate with a more emphatic proclamation of the ultimate, and also protect the ultimate by taking due care of the penultimate.[23]

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[22] Bonhoeffer, p. 139.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

## SERMON

# WHEN JESUS TURNED AWAY

## BY CHARLES A. HERRICK

> After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a multitude followed him, because they saw the signs which he did on those who were diseased. Jesus went up into the hills, and there sat down with his disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a multitude was coming to him, Jesus said to Philip, "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?"
>
> (John 6:1-5)

> Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the hills by himself.
>
> (John 6:15)

Gravely, with utmost solemnity proper to the occasion, a man enters the darkened room full of hooded men, and sets the mood by switching on the electric cross. Just as seriously, five more men are led into the room, and placing their hands on the Holy Bible, repeat the Christian ideals cherished by all Ku Klux Klan members. We who observed this travesty on television a few months ago were shocked by the flagrant use of Christ for a purpose less than worthy of him. We who are on the outside of that secret organization, we who are on the other side, could not but be a little pleased with ourselves that we never make such an absolute claim on Christ. Then we attend our next civil rights rally. With great intensity we sing the first verses of "We Shall Overcome." With just as much conviction we begin to sing the second verse, until we are brought up short by that refrain whose idea is somehow familiar to our ears, "God is on our side." Do we never make a claim on Christ that we are less than 100 per cent sure of? In the events recorded in the sixth chapter of John we can see

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clearly the paradoxes of our wholly sincere yet seriously misguided demands on the person of Christ. This chapter contains also the mysterious paradox of the true Christ with us in the midst of our sinfully proud lives.

The particular verses we have before us today tell us of a crisis in Jesus' ministry. According to the accounts of the other gospel writers the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand took place just after Jesus and his disciples had received news of the death of John the Baptist. To the Roman Empire John's death meant another potential troublemaker out of the way. To the masses of Jews John's death was a tragic disappointment. Another prophet had arisen and then fallen without re-establishing the glory of Jerusalem. But perhaps all was not lost, for John himself had spoken highly of a new figure on the horizon, a carpenter called Jesus of Nazareth.

This Jesus was a rather unlikely figure for a leader; he and his friends were hardly the imposing force to face up to Rome. Yet he did have the quality that attracted people to him. He did have a persuasive way of speaking, even if what he said was not always clear. And he did perform miracles. Some said he was able to create life, to make living wine out of water. Many had seen that he could heal the sick and so restore life. If he could do these things, why could he not restore Israel out of the bondage of Rome? Why could he not create a new national life for the people of God? Here now was a new hope—someone to have faith in—and the people were not going to let him get away. They said, "Let's stick with this man. Let's watch him closely, and when the right moment comes we'll make him a king. He must be the Messiah the prophets spoke about! John the Baptist as much as came out and told us so."

With the knowledge of these sentiments of the people and the sorrow over John's death, Jesus withdrew across the Sea of Galilee and up into the quiet hills. But the people were impatient to have him with them, performing his miracles of healing and showing them what a powerful ruler he would make. So the people saw where he was going and without even taking provisions with them, went around by way of the shore to the place where he and his disciples were. When Jesus saw that he was not to have peace, but that here was a huge crowd of people coming toward him and expecting something from him, he asked Philip, "How will we feed all these people?" Told that there was a boy present who had five barley loaves and two small fish, Jesus had all the people sit down. Then he satisfied the hunger of all of the five thousand, and even had twelve baskets of food left over.

*This* was the sort of thing the people were looking for. They knew that if they kept after him he would not disappoint them. It was obvious that this man had the power to do and to be whatever he wanted. Remembering again John's comment about this man, the crowd said, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world." Would he accept the title of king right here and now? How could he refuse? But verse 15 says, "Perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the hills by himself." Jesus had no choice here but to reject the advances of the people, because the people misunderstood him. They misunderstood the reason he was healing the sick, the reason he provided them with bread when they were in need. Here was the Christ, the Word which was in the world, and the world did not know him. Here was the Word coming to his own people, and they did not receive him.

But how can it be said they did not receive him? They not only received him when he came to them; they were so eager to be witnesses to what he was doing that they would not leave him alone, but went to him. In a paraphrase of St. Augustine's thought, these people were saying to Jesus, "Our hearts are restless until we find our Messiah in thee." So we ask, Why did Jesus refuse this offer to become king, to become Messiah? If Jesus was not the Messiah, who was he? Is he one who when we approach with the type of faith these people displayed turns away from us and withdraws into the hills? For the answer I think we must look again at what is written in John, chapter six.

The day after he performed his miracle, Jesus again confronted some of the same people back in the town of Capernaum. They had seen how he withdrew from them and his disciples and they were surprised to see him back now on the other side of the sea. Perceiving that they sought some explanation of his behavior of the day before, he spoke to them, and what he said revealed what kind of Messiah he was. He said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on him has God the Father set his seal . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (John 6:26-51). The more he talked this way, the more his followers began to say, "This is a hard saying, who can listen to it?" And finally, in verse 66, "after this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him."

This was the beginning of the end. The day before Jesus had been at the height of his popularity. The people had followed him into the hills, and he had responded to their gesture with the most spectacular miracle yet. He did not disappoint them, and they would have made him king. But now as he spoke to them just a day later, he was disappointing them. Some began to murmur against him as if to say, "This man is overstepping his boundaries. We offered to make him king, but he would not take it. Now he is making claims about himself which we would be better off not to be a part of." Jesus offered them not the political kingdom they wanted, but himself as the Bread of Life; and they refused him. His goals were not theirs, their claims were not his.

Actually, now the matter was out in the open. It was time for a decision, and their decision was that this man did not after all measure up to Israel's Messiah; they would have to look for still another. Here, if they could have seen it, they were taking a stand against their only hope, the only Messiah that would come to them, no matter how poorly he fit their formula.

We as believers have also made our decision. We have decided to follow him, knowing that he is the Bread of Life; we have made our basic confession in him and declaration for him, and therefore have not followed those who rejected him. Yet in our following are we not often guilty of committing the more subtle but no less serious error that this crowd committed the day before? Do we always accept him as the Bread of Life, and never try to make him something he is not, to lay our own claims upon him?

The people who followed Jesus into the hills came to him making their claim on his time and powers. In feeding them he satisfied them, and they were grateful for it. But in praising his powers they overlooked his person. They made claims on Jesus which were not in keeping with his purpose. They forced themselves upon him; they tried to make him fit their mold. They would let Jesus go just so far, and then they had to take over. Paradoxically, they were so anxious to see the signs of God in the miracles of Jesus that they failed to see beyond the sign itself to the Word of God in their midst.

If there is one thing we can learn from the nearsightedness of the multitude it is that when we stand in relation to Christ we are called to accept him, the whole man. The giving of the bread is only a sign which points to his giving of himself at the last supper and ultimately upon the cross. When we forget this and try to fit Christ into our own designs he is forced to retreat from us. God in Christ must take the first step. When we rush in upon him not recognizing that he must speak the first word we are like linemen in a football game rushing in upon the quarterback to make sure he does not perform in a way contrary to our wishes. In acting so boldly we place ourselves in opposition to Christ. If we look first to our purposes and try to superimpose Christ's powerful presence upon them, we force him to withdraw again into the hills. What we see as our best intentions have the possibility of being repelled again and again because we have not first considered how Christ comes to us.

A catch phrase and a new theological theme popular now in religious circles is, "Your God is too small," the theological position that God is dead, that God has somehow withdrawn himself for a time from the sphere of human activity. Without expounding on either of these let me simply say that when put together they seem to describe what happens when we call on God without recognizing first and always what he has revealed himself to be. That is, God is dead for us, he does recede from us, if our view of him is too small. Christ will draw back into the hills if we come at him with our preconceived ideas, if we sidle up to him as if he were the decorative border on the painting of life we have already finished and on which we have already proudly put our own name.

Yet what else is it but this self-righteousness that finds both the Ku Klux Klan and the civil rights movement claiming a monopoly of God for the fulfilling of their own ends, that finds throughout history Christian countries engaged in holy wars against each other, each claiming to have God on its side? We apparently have not outgrown the tendency to try to make Christ do what we want him to do.

But where does all this leave us? Did Christ come into the world simply to leave us in the dark? If we cannot be sure he will be with us, does not that mean we are always going to be on our own? And if so, why do we not all become good humanists and carry on under our own power? Once again we must return to the sixth chapter of John. We have seen how Jesus drew back after the miracle because the people misunderstood him. We have seen how many of Jesus' followers drew back the next day after he had interpreted the true significance of the miracle in terms of his own person. But so far we have not mentioned an incident described in verses 16-21.

> When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea rose because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat. They were frightened, but he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

However, wherever, and whenever the disciples expected to join their Master again, it certainly was not under these conditions. Similarly, after the crucifixion the frightened disciples were gathered together behind closed and locked doors. And again, more miraculously than ever before, Christ suddenly appeared in their midst. He who had drawn back from them and this time was apparently gone for good was suddenly in the midst of them. At these times, when it seemed absurd to suppose that Jesus was at hand to guide them, he was there among them. The stage was not set for Christ to enter; the preparations had not been made, nor the speeches written and the routine planned, but there he was. Jesus now returned to them as he had come into the world—unexpected by man. The disciples were little more ready to receive the Savior as he then chose to come than was the innkeeper some thirty years before.

This is the real miracle of Christ, that being forced to withdraw from us because we refuse to accept him as he really is, he nevertheless returns to us when and where he will. He returns as he is to us as we are, despite our sin, despite the fact that he knows that in our little faith we will misinterpret again and again what he is accomplishing in himself. As he refuses to be manipulated by our purposes, so he makes himself known to us only at his initiative. We continually set up obstacles to his true presence, but his purposes break through all attempts to use him cheaply. If he withdraws from us and we are on our own, we are assured it is never for too long.

We must patiently await his return to us in our own boats, behind our own doors, wherever we are. But because we have known his presence, we must act on our own so that in the midst of our activity he might make his presence felt again. We must act in faith, being careful not to force the person of Jesus upon our human endeavors. As often as he leaves us on his own, how much more often does he enter our lives in the most miraculous and unexpected ways. If we are really to be faithful to him when he comes, we as Christians must continually acknowledge him as the Bread of Life, the Messiah of the entire world, and nothing less. Sometimes we need Christ's presence in the gaps of our lives, sometimes in the most crowded moments. But let us never be either too dull or too preoccupied to recognize when he comes to us in the only way we can really know him, as the Messiah who turns the tables on our efforts to make him something less than he is, has been, and always will be.

# CHRISTIANITY AND SEXUAL DEVIATION

## Responsible Attitude and Action

BY C. DANIEL BATSON

My intention here is to present briefly but adequately an analysis of the responsibility of the Christian to and for the sexual deviant. If any word is to be considered key in this discussion, it must be "responsibility." H. Richard Niebuhr suggests, and rightly I believe, that "the symbol of responsibility contains . . . hidden references, allusions, and similes which are in the depths of our mind as we grope for understanding of ourselves and toward a definition of ourselves in action."[1] Niebuhr points out that though the meaning of "responsibility" has evolved over the centuries, it has been applied only to "man-the-maker" and "man-the-citizen." The former refers to man as a purposive agent who, like an artificer, "constructs things according to an idea and for the sake of an end"; the latter refers to man as under the law.[2] Thus, man-the-citizen rejects the idea that man can view his personal life as he does his craft, for man has no control over the material of his own existence personally and socially; rather, man must attempt to rule his body, sensations, and impulses even as he is politically ruled. For man-the-maker the question which he seeks to answer in determining action is, "What is my goal, ideal, or *telos*?" while man-the-citizen attempts to answer, "What is the law and what is the first law of my life?"

Niebuhr goes on to suggest a third understanding of the symbol of responsibility which has grown out of the awareness that the above interpretations seem inadequate to deal with the numerous situations in today's world which demand responsible action.[3]

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[1] *The Responsible Self* (New York: Harper & Row, Inc., 1963), p. 48. The following sketch of Niebuhr's view relies heavily on this chapter.

[2] Niebuhr, p. 48.

[3] Niebuhr cites the problem of desegregation in which one is faced with the conflict of obedience to law and desire for achievement of the ideal of im-

> In this situation the rise of the new symbolism of responsibility is important. It represents an alternative or an additional way of conceiving and defining this existence of ours that is the material of our own actions. What is implicit in the idea of responsibility is the image of man-the-answerer, man engaged in dialogue, man acting in response to action upon him. . . . Now we think of all our actions as having the pattern of what we do when we answer another who addresses us.[4]

The initial question which man-the-answerer seeks to answer in striving to act responsibly is, "What is going on?" After he has interpreted the action upon him (i.e., his situation), he acts in anticipation of answers which will be presented to our answers (accountability) and the context of self within a continuing society (social solidarity). Niebuhr summarizes his analysis:

> The idea or pattern of responsibility, then may summarily and abstractly be defined as the idea of an agent's action as response to an action upon him in accordance with his interpretation of the latter action and with his expectation of response to his response; and all of this is in a continuing community of agents.[5]

Having presented such an analysis, however, Niebuhr realizes that the problem of responsible action is far from solved. Thus far, he has only presented an interpretation—and I think an extremely helpful one for our task here—of responsibility. He must still ask the further question, "To whom or what am I responsible and in what community of interaction am I myself?"[6] Though Niebuhr answers this question in general terms of the Christian's response in Christ to God's redemptive action in society, time and the concreteness of contingent existence,[7] this is the question which we must seek to answer with specific reference to sexual deviation in American society today. I shall attempt to approach this extremely large question through attention to three smaller questions: First, what is the "question" which the sexual deviant asks? Second, what is the community in which the question is asked? And third, what is our "answer"?

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mediate integration. It seems that a closely parallel example is that of sexual deviation—one faces the conflict of another human being who lives in opposition to the traditional moral dictates of society and of Christianity, but is nevertheless another human being. It is because of this context that Niebuhr's reinterpretation of responsibility becomes focal for our analysis.

[4] Niebuhr, p. 56. [5] Niebuhr, p. 65. [6] Niebuhr, p. 68.

[7] Niebuhr, pp. 88, 107-109, 144-145.

### *WHAT QUESTION DOES THE SEXUAL DEVIANT ASK?*

Immediately the Christian is confronted by a barrage of questions from the sexual deviant: Can and will you help me? Why can't I stop? What's wrong with me anyway? What should I do? Why won't you help me? In order to attempt a responsible answer to these questions, one must first have some understanding of who is asking the question. The following excerpt from a statement by an anonymous author serves as an introduction to sexual deviation from the point of view of the deviant and will hopefully set a context for the remarks which follow, restricting the temptation to lose the humanity of the deviant within a maze of labels and analyses.

> I am a homosexual, a convicted felon. I have served time in a State prison. Now I am on parole, trying to win my way back to the place in society I had forfeited. So far as I can see, I have no hostility toward those who prosecuted me. The district attorney who had to send me to jail told me how much he regretted a painful necessity. This is the story of how one man had to learn what it really means to be a member of a shunned, outcast group. No clergyman or psychiatrist, no matter how sympathetic he may be, can really know what it means to live in constant fear—as every homosexual must and does live.
>
> I am an average sort—not too tall and certainly not short; not fat, perhaps a bit on the lean side. I am youngish—thirty or so. It is doubtful that anyone would look at me twice. I could pass unnoticed on any college campus, or on Park Avenue or Beacon Hill, or their counterparts in Chicago or San Francisco. I could be any middle class young man. My psychiatrist and the clergyman who are trying to help me—both of them knowing their way around in such matters—tell me that, so far as they can see, I bear none of the marks by which the man in the street believes he can recognize the homosexual. I could be anyone in a big city.
>
> I am not alone. There are numberless men like me. And women, too. They come from all walks of life. I speak for the silent—what a reformed communist called the faceless men. Nor can I reveal my identity. Apart from my fear of losing a good job, although my trouble is known to my employer, there are others to be considered—my family, the few friends who stood by me and trusted me in the town where I had lived all my life. Nor have I, so far as I know, any desire to exploit my experiences. I need anonymity. The minister in my home town who felt that I could write assured me that I could help others through telling what happened to me. He asked me to

> put aside a natural reluctance to talk about painful things and faithfully promised me protection from prying eyes.
>
> Until I was taken to prison, I lived and worked in a good sized town. My family had been there for generations. I was a member of the professional class—with a certain amount of standing in a community where, a few years ago, there were not too many college graduates. I lived on the right side of the railroad tracks. I had an interesting job and a chance to rise in the world. The future seemed to hold promise for a respected career as a conventional middle class American.
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> I considered myself an average sort of Christian. I could not call myself conspicuously devout, although I attended church regularly enough. I was financially honest. The temptation to steal never arose —I was doing well enough financially, and I had about what I wanted. I suppose I told as few lies as the next. I looked upon myself as a young man on the way up.
>
> There was a problem in my life with which I could not cope on any terms. I was a homosexual. How I became one is not for me to say. There was no one to whom I could bring my problem. I was afraid to talk to my minister—he expressed himself vehemently against what he called degenerates. Although I consider myself of better than average intelligence, I never thought of consulting a psychiatrist. Psychiatrists, where I came from, were for the insane. And I never had any fears for my sanity.
>
> I was not proud of my state. I hated it, and I hated myself. And yet I continued in it. There are those who say that a homosexual must accept himself for what he is. This I could not do. The few contacts I had were with persons and in places that could only be described as sordid. When they were over, I wanted to get away as quickly as possible. Usually I went with male prostitutes whom I never wanted to see again.
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> I have never regarded myself as a member of a homosexual community. There were no places in my town where homosexuals could get together. I led two lives—my public life as a rising young man who was becoming an important member of society and a secret, shameful life. This I lived when loneliness, bitterness and frustration drove me out to find—more truthfully to buy—companionship.[8]

Perhaps the best analysis to use as an introduction to a more objective approach to sexual deviation is that presented by James C. Coleman in *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*. Coleman presents an extensive list of types of deviation, indicating that these may be classified into three general groups: First, deviations involving excessive or deficient sexual activity or desire (impotence and frigidity, satyriasis and nymphomania); second, sexual behavior which involves antisocial conditions (promiscuity and prostitution, rape, incest); and third, sexual patterns which are considered abnormal in regard to the choice of sexual partner or object (masturbation, homosexuality and transvestitism, pedophilia, bestiality, exhibitionism, voyeurism, fetishism, necrophilia, sadism, masochism).[9] Note that the understanding of deviation presented by Coleman is in relation to both the normative actions and the stated mores of the culture, allowing him to classify impotence, satyriasis, and masturbation among deviations. In part such an understanding of sexual deviation appears most pertinent to the discussion here because Christendom has traditionally been the major promoter of these mores, and those who violate them often confront the church with a demand for responsibility. However, deviants from the normative action of the culture who do not necessarily violate the mores of our society (Coleman's first group, including impotence, frigidity, satyriasis and nymphomania) will not be considered in the following discussion, because they do not usually confront Christianity in the same context as deviations of the other two types, the former arising almost exclusively in marital counseling (though one may deviate in this manner due to the presence of latent or overt deviations of the latter two types).

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[8] A. A. Gross, *Strangers in Our Midst* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1962), pp. 45-46.

Concerning Coleman's deviations from accepted social conditions and accepted sexual partner or object, more detailed discussion shall be limited for the sake of brevity to a representative of each group—prostitution of the former and homosexuality of the latter. In many ways the dynamics which appear behind both prostitution and homosexuality are similar, though generally feelings of guilt, shame and inadequacy are less extreme in prostitutes, for society is much less critical of such activity than of homosexuality and the other "perversions." As expected, society reacts more violently to the more alien threat to its stability.

[9] Coleman, p. 360. A somewhat different classification of deviant behavior is presented by R. W. White in *The Abnormal Personality* (2nd ed.; New York: Ronald Press Co., 1956), p. 405. White divides deviations according to the abnormality of (1) the sex object, or (2) the aim of the sexual experience, citing homosexuality as an example of the former and exhibitionism and voyeurism as examples of the latter. The apparent uncertainty of his meaning of the aim of sexual experience has led me to reject his classification.

Vern L. Bullough concisely summarizes literature on prostitution, indicating the paucity of adequate scientific research in the area. He is, however, able to point to studies in England by an anonymous author, in France by Maryse Choisy and in the United States by Harold Greenwald, which do show sensitivity to scientific methods of research in using depth studies, though the number of prostitutes interviewed in each case is too small for one to draw any definite conclusions.[10] The English study finds different personalities and status levels among prostitutes: the more well-to-do tend to be charming, educated and apparently sympathetic, while the poorer are more socially bitter and disinterested in their customers. Also, all of the prostitutes are found to reflect alienation to society, and to work hard at their jobs though none feel they work for pleasure. Among the 150 prostitutes questioned, most transferred their own guilt feelings to their customers: They are earning their wages while their customers deceive their wives. The French psychoanalyst, Maryse Choisy, presents a detailed study of twelve cases, concluding that the relation of prostitute to client is one of debasement, both expressing aggression and hostility in a sadomasochistic relationship. As Bullough points out, however, Choisy's generalizations appear unfounded because of the size of the sample. Greenwald, interviewing a sample of twenty prostitutes, finds as does the English study a class distinction among prostitutes. He claims the primary predisposing factor in the girls' backgrounds to be severe maternal deprivation. Loss of mother-love leads the girl to turn to the father, and when he fails to give the necessary emotional support, she turns to self-abasement in an attempt to hurt the parents. Also, prostitution becomes a search for security, for warmth and love not received as a child.

Bullough in summarizing several other studies points out two factors significant in the prostitute's personal make-up: first, he suggests the prostitute and her client both present false or pseudo-personalities to the other. Thus, the prostitute avoids the closeness of a truly affectionate relationship which would produce anxiety she is too immature to handle. Second, prostitution appears to be only a temporary adjustment from which most girls pass on to more socially acceptable activities. Bullough concludes:

> In sum, there is no easy answer to why girls turn to "intercourse of

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[10] *Saturday Review*, September 4, 1965, pp. 52-54. The following discussion of these studies is based on Bullough's presentation.

> the genitals" and not of the person. Prostitution is clearly an antisocial behavior in most Western societies, and is undoubtedly a method of emotional adjustment to meet deep psychological needs. It is also obvious that after nearly 150 years of behavioral investigation into the subject, there is still no really comprehensive study of prostitution.[11]

However, sufficient objective data appears available at this time to take a side in what have probably been the two most basic debates concerning homosexuality. The first concerns the nature of sex: Are there two distinct sexes, male and female, or are there masculine and feminine characteristics of each individual? (A parallel and closely related question is: Are there two clear-cut groups, homosexual and heterosexual, or do these two terms represent poles of a continuum?) The second question concerns the cause of homosexuality: Is it principally due to heredity or to developmental factors? Concerning the first question, George W. Henry asserts, "It is scientifically inaccurate to classify persons as fully male or female. Instead, the attributes of individuals should be studied to determine their relative masculinity and femininity."[12] The opposing side is implicit in Margaret Mead's popular work, *Male and Female,* in which the author seems to assume that the two sexes are quite distinct and that an individual must fall into one category or the other.[13] Henry's statement appears to gain decisive support from the well-known results of psychometric instruments with masculinity-feminity scales such as the MMPI in which scores fall along a definite continuum. Note, however, that we are speaking here on the level of personality and not physiologically; the significant fact is that one may clearly identify with a sexual role which would be traditionally contrasted to the role prescribed for one of his physical construction.

Concerning the related question of a clear-cut distinction between homosexual and heterosexual, both Coleman and Bieber appeal to the results of the famous studies by Kinsey, *et al.* to substantiate their conclusions that here again a continuum exists with these two types at the poles and in between many individuals whose experiences and psychic reactions combine heterosexual and homosexual components.

[11] Bullough, p. 54.

[12] Henry, *All the Sexes* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1955), p. 584. This would appear to contradict Karl Barth's assumption (*Church Dogmatics* III/4.54) that the sexes are neatly separated and ordered divinely.

[13] Mead, p. 272.

50 per cent of the adult male population has neither overt nor psychic experiences of a homosexual nature after the onset of adolescence.

13 per cent of all males react erotically to other males without having overt homosexual experiences after the onset of adolescence.

37 per cent of all males have homosexual experience to the point of orgasm after the onset of adolescence.

50 per cent of all males who remain unmarried to the age of 35 have had overt homosexual experience to the point of orgasm since the onset of adolescence.

18 per cent of all males reveal as much of the homosexual as the heterosexual in their histories.

8 per cent of males engage exclusively in homosexual activities for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55.

4 per cent of males are exclusively homosexual from adolescence on.[14]

The second question above, concerning the causes of homosexual behavior, seems to require an answer in favor of developmental factors as of primary importance. Coleman summarizes arguments on both sides of this question as follows.[15] Those supporting constitutional causes emphasize either genetic inheritance, assuming homosexuality is transmitted via recessive genes (noting that many families may have a rather high incidence of homosexuality over a period of two or more generations), or endocrine balance (pointing out that male homosexuals show a high percentage of female hormones in the blood stream and female homosexuals a high percentage of male hormones).

In response to these assertions, it may be argued that the repetition of homosexuality within a family may be due to environmental factors (since a homosexual is part of the developmental environment of the child), as well as to constitutional factors. Also, several facts raise questions about endocrine imbalance causing homosexuality: (1) many homosexuals do not appear to have such imbalances; (2) many non-homosexuals show similar endocrine imbalances; (3) endocrine balance may remain constant while an individual shifts from a homosexual to a heterosexual pattern, or vice versa; (4) endocrine imbalance may be a result rather than a cause of homosexuality; and (5) though treatment with sex hormones may be used to alter the endocrine imbalance, such treatment does not usually modify the direction of sexual behavior. Coleman concludes, "Constitutional factors undoubtedly play an *interactional* role in homosexuality; beyond that we cannot speak with certainty."[16]

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[14] Kinsey, *et al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1948), in Coleman, p. 379. Cf. also Irving Bieber, ed. *Homosexuality* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962), p. 304. Although Kinsey's sampling methods and interpretation appear questionable, this data is helpful in presenting a general picture.

[15] Coleman, pp. 372-374.

Concerning evidence for developmental causes of homosexuality, Coleman states that early experiences of the individual appear central. Thus, (1) early homosexual experience has been found to be a common environmental factor among 79 per cent of homosexuals studied by W. N. East;[17] (2) rearing a child as a member of the opposite sex may greatly influence later development; (3) close identification with the parent of the opposite sex may contribute to homosexuality; (4) unhappy experiences with members of the opposite sex may drive one away from heterosexual relationships; (5) prolonged heterosexual frustration such as experienced by prisoners may force one into homosexuality (though the process may be reversed when the restrictive situation is removed); and (6) some psychoanalysts emphasize as a cause of homosexuality early male fears relating to castration which are reinforced by the shock of viewing female genitalia.[18]

One further factor which has been noted in homosexual studies deserves mention here, viz., that generally one is able to recognize different types of homosexuals. For example, Henry points to three groups, the orderly, the hoodlum and the fairy.[19] He characterizes the orderly as those who seek to maintain a social position characteristic of the middle class or better, may be married or single, attempt to maintain complete secrecy about their deviant behavior, and are generally quite concerned about their homosexual behavior. An excellent example of this type appears to be the anonymous author of the brief autobiography cited above. The hoodlum groups seek to appear little concerned about sexual relations, considering sexual contact generally devoid of emotional content and claiming little preference for men or women. Thus, most are bisexual, but finding relations with men more easily obtained and more lucrative, they often become homosexual prostitutes with little ambition for change. Hoodlum homosexuals tend to gather in certain areas of large cities, forming ghettos in which it is easier to find effeminate homosexuals to satisfy their needs. The third type, the fairy, may be thought of as the effeminate counterpart of the hoodlum homosexual. A fairy is apt to dress like and even think of himself as a woman, calling himself by a feminine nickname and adopting feminine mannerisms. Generally they are despised and rejected by the orderly homosexuals because they tend to flaunt their behavior in public, bringing homosexuals into disrepute. Although many fairies come from underprivileged environments often involving family rejection, they are perhaps the freest from anxiety of all homosexuals, because in openly displaying their behavior they live in no fear of being discovered.[20]

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

[17] East, "Sexual Offenders," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* (1946), in Coleman, p. 373.

[18] Cf. Coleman, pp. 372-374.

[19] Henry, p. 303. The following explication of these types is drawn from this source.

In attempting to summarize the basic personality dynamics of the sexual deviant, a word of caution must be interjected: Although the factors listed seem to be basic and frequent characteristics of the deviant's past or present life, each deviant is an individual, whose sexual behavior is a reaction to and results in problems which in some sense are unique to him; therefore, our stylizing of the sexual deviant can serve only as a general guideline for understanding and can never adequately summarize the individual.

With this caution in mind, an attempt must be made to present a brief synopsis of common factors in the past and present life of the deviant. First, the sexual deviant tends to have in his background specific experiences which lead him into sexual deviation rather than into other types of deviation when stresses force him away from normative patterns, including childhood peer experiences and parental attitudes toward him and toward sexual behavior. Second, the sexual deviant often finds normal heterosexual relationships either impossible or extremely threatening—impossible because heterosexual partners consider him inadequate; threatening because he considers himself inadequate. Third, as a result of such a background the deviant seeks to indulge his natural need for affection through whatever forms of behavior are available due to either past or present circumstances. Fourth, once such deviant activity which provides even partial release from the internal tensions is initiated, this activity tends to become compulsive, and the individual either yields completely to the compulsion (e.g., the hoodlum and fairy homosexual), or he finds himself with extreme feelings of guilt and anxiety that his behavior is no longer within his control, perhaps leading to aggression as in the case of many prostitutes. Thus, sexually deviant behavior is not for the individual who confronts the possibility immediately of a simple choice of right or wrong action; rather, it is an outgrowth of his total life, a symptom or expression of his personal needs.[21] In briefest terms this is the sexual deviant, and the "question" which he places before the Christian is himself, his existence.

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[20] This entire introduction to homosexual practices has centered exclusively on male homosexuality. The omission of female homosexuality appears justified by the apparent similarity of the dynamics involved and the less frequent occurrence of homosexual relationships among women (cf. Coleman, p. 369).

### *IN WHAT COMMUNITY IS THE QUESTION ASKED?*

Several sociologists and theologians are suggesting to us that a radical shift in man's understanding of the social world in which he lives has taken place within our century. Perhaps the most instructive of these analyses for our purposes have been made by the Dutch missionary Arend Th. van Leeuwen and the American theologian-sociologist Harvey Cox. Both van Leeuwen and Cox draw much of their original impetus from Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his now famous statement that ours is "a world come of age." Generally, this phrase has been taken as affirmation that our world is finally adult, as Cox appears to assume. I would suggest, however, that this may be a misreading of Bonhoeffer's intent, for to say that an individual has come of age usually means (as with Margaret Mead's book *Coming of Age in Samoa*) that one has reached puberty, the onset of a time of struggle, questioning, and re-evaluation euphemistically called adolescence.[22] Taken in this manner Bonhoeffer's statement seems to present a valuable key to understanding our present American cultural situation, for in this context one is made aware not only of the new freedom which man is experiencing but also of his struggle with the metaphysical laws of childhood which he both rejects and yet clings to for security.

What is the nature of this new freedom of which van Leeuwen and Cox speak? Van Leeuwen presents Western history as a tension between two orientations for the relation of man to reality—the ontocratic pattern which emerges from mythical and ontological cosmologies, and the biblical theocratic pattern in which God as Lord acts in human history but will not be totally identified with man.[23] In recent years a third pattern of understanding has emerged out of this tension, the technocratic, which is expressed in the emergence of modern technology and functional secularism. Because of this base, the technocratic pattern is in strong opposition to the metaphysical focus of the ontology in the ontocratic era; thus the traditional structure of a well-oiled universe run by a transcendent God according to rigid natural laws has, for technocracy, collapsed. With the fall of this structure the traditional morals also lose their ultimacy; no longer can one casually dictate what is right or wrong action because "That's what I was taught," or "It says so right here."

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[21] Helmut Thielicke presents a similar understanding of homosexuality in *The Ethics of Sex* (Tr. J. W. Doberstein; New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 269-291, although he seems to err in emphasizing constitutional determination over developmental determination.

[22] Such an interpretation of Bonhoeffer's statement appears much more in line with his own personal quest and struggle (cf. *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 1953) than does the assertion that ours is an adult world.

It is due to this liberation from a metaphysical moral legalism that the Christian can and must re-examine his response to the sexual deviant. "Can" because now one may see beyond categorical condemnation to the possibility of responding sincerely to such a person as an individual rather than one of a culturally pre-judged group; "must" because to recognize the deviant as an individual precludes any simple classification and moral pronouncement—it requires responsibility. Thus, although the Christian should be familiar with responses to sexual deviation made by Christians in other times and places, he cannot simply adopt any one of these pronouncements, even those recorded in the Bible, though he may well discover a style or approach which he may helpfully interpret into his own responsibility in his own situation.

The ontocratic era exercises its pressure on modern America in terms of our sexual ethics, dictating generally accepted rigid requirements of conformity to a prescribed pattern of sexual behavior. Thus, in modern America the sexual deviant finds himself clearly defined as just that—a deviant. Regardless of what appeals may be made for the integrity of forms of sexual expression other than heterosexual monogamy, the fact remains that within our society the deviant is acutely aware of his existence (whether as an individual or one within a ghettoed sub-culture which may accept his behavior) as a deviation from the prescribed cultural mores into antisocial behavior.[24] Thus, the community in which the Christian faces the question of sexual deviation exhibits two major factors which are continually in tension. First, it is secular, presenting the individual with a new freedom in and responsibility for his own actions, challenging the Christian to examine his own personal and inter-personal existence without appeal to prejudgments. But second, it is a community in which the sexual deviant is an outcast because shreds of the moral code of the ontocratic era remain.

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[23] The summary of van Leeuwen's argument presented here is based on an analysis presented by F. V. Cariño, Princeton Theological Seminary, October, 1965, and the credit for whatever adequacy it has is his.

### *WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S ANSWER?*

Although the distinction is necessarily somewhat artificial, I shall attempt to present the Christian answer first in terms of attitude and then of action. In an attempt to develop a contemporary Christian attitude toward sexual deviation, one will do well to set it in the context of prior attitudes expressed by Christians. Perhaps the most adequate discussion of the attitude of the biblical writers to sexual deviation is presented by William G. Cole in his two books *Sex and Love in the Bible* and *Sex in Christianity and Psychoanalysis.* In briefest terms the position of the biblical writers as presented by Cole is as follows: First, concerning deviations involving normal sexual relations under antisocial circumstances, the Old Testament writers frown on prostitution (though not altogether forbidding male recourse to harlots) and require that a man caught in adultery with a virgin who is not betrothed only be compelled to marry the girl, receiving no other punishment (Deut. 22:28). In contrast, the New Testament writers prohibit all such actions. Yet, the account of Jesus' treatment of the woman caught in adultery in the possibly spurious passage in John 8 indicates what appears to be a key factor in the New Testament attitude—condemnation of the act ("Go and sin no more") but no greater condemnation of the individual than each man experiences ("Let he who has not sinned . . ." and "Neither do I condemn you . . .").[25] Second, deviations involving other than a heterosexual partner as the sexual object are condemned and severe punishments are prescribed by both the Hebrews and the early church. Homosexuality is condemned as both a sin and a crime, an attitude which has been influential throughout Western history (Cf. Gen. 19; Deut. 22:5; Judges 19). Cole suggests that this quite negative reaction to such behavior may have arisen for religious reasons, for Israel's neighbors used male cult prostitutes in their exaltation of sexuality as the creative principle in nature; thus for them male prostitution is closely associated with idolatry.[26]

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[24] One may well imagine that if the personality dynamics leading to sexual deviation outlined above are accurate, to remove this label of deviation from variant sexual behavior might considerably reduce the number of persons engaging in such deviation, for one of the motivations for variation appears to be the desire to adopt antisocial behavior.

A somewhat contrasting view to that presented here is expressed by Karl Menninger and Otto Piper, who tend to emphasize the change in attitudes toward sex in modern American society; cf. Karl Menninger, *Love Against Hate* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1942), pp. 283ff. and Piper, *The Biblical View of Sex and Marriage* (New York: Scribner, 1960), pp. 103ff. Although certainly some changes in attitudes toward sex have occurred, most seem to represent a new freedom to discuss sexual matters rather than any change of views concerning acceptable sexual practices.

Cole presents what seems to be a helpful summary of the biblical view of sex in terms of the doctrines of creation, original sin and redemption. The doctrine of creation affirms the positive nature of the body and of sexual relations; original sin indicates the biblical awareness that all men suffer from anxiety and estrangement, some using deviant practices in an attempt to find meaning within this existence; and the doctrine of redemption points to the essentiality of adopting a therapeutic or redemptive approach to all human beings.[27]

A. A. Gross seems to summarize adequately the attitude of ontocratic Christendom to sexual deviation, also indicating the danger of such a position, speaking specifically of the church's attitude toward homosexuals.

> In the past, the church made its attitude toward homosexuality so clearcut and unequivocal that men feared to resort to its ministers in their time of trouble. For the most part, the church's distaste for the problem was so obvious that homosexuals preferred to go without benefit of clergy. They felt that the church regarded them as heretics or worse—quite beyond the charity of Christians.
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> In its view of the sexual deviant, the church assumed that he was a free agent, capable of his own volition to sin or refrain from sin-

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[25] Cf. Cole, *Sex and Love*, pp. 306 ff. Cf. also Paul's attitude toward the deviant behavior in the Corinthian church. He too condemns the action but accepts the parties involved as persons to whom God's redeeming love is extended.

[26] Cole, *Sex and Love*, pp. 343ff.

[27] Cole, *Sex in Christianity*, p. 315. Other studies of the biblical attitudes toward sexual deviation may be found in D. E. Bailey, *Homosexuality and Western Christian Tradition* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1955), Piper, *op. cit.*, and R. H. Bainton, *What Christianity Says About Sex, Love and Marriage* (New York: Association Press, 1965).

> ning. If he found himself in an unenviable position, he had only himself to blame. He put himself there through his own perversity. Thus the institution felt that it could afford to disclaim any sort of responsibility for him. It said in effect that homosexuals excommunicated themselves by their conduct, thus cutting themselves off from fellowship with the faithful.[28]

Within this context the generally accepted Christian view of even normal practices came to be that sex was a necessary evil to be indulged in for purposes of procreation.[29]

In the context of this somewhat inauspicious background of a rather dogmatic attitude toward sexual deviants in Western Christendom, what is to be the Christian's attitude within the modern secular context? First, it must be affirmed that no definitive statement for responsible attitude and action valid for all contemporary Christians can or should be presented. Speaking of responsibility in much the same way Niebuhr does, Bonhoeffer cautions us in his *Ethics*:

> The responsible man is dependent on the man who is concretely his neighbour in his concrete possibility. His conduct is not established in advance, once and for all, that is to say, as a matter of principle, but it arises with the given situation. He has no principle at his disposal which possesses absolute validity and which is offered to it by reality, but he sees in the given situation what is necessary and what is "right" for him to grasp and to do.[30]

Thus, our attempt here shall be to present only guidelines which may prove of service as the Christian seeks to present himself as man-the-answerer to the sexual deviant.

First, it would appear that in either total acceptance or total rejection of the sexual deviant the Christian does not act responsibly. In the former he would deny both the essential estrangement from society which the sexual deviant experiences in contemporary American culture and the biological otherness with the possibility of procreation as a contributing factor in a sexual relationship.[31] In the latter, the Christian would deny the reality of the deviant as an individual who

[28] Gross, p. 98.

[29] Seward Hiltner outlines the development of this view in *Sex and the Christian Life* (New York: Association Press, 1957), pp. 10-13.

[30] Bonhoeffer, p. 227.

[31] At the biological level, Barth appears justified in insisting on a basic otherness and order in the sexual relationship of man and woman; however, when he generalizes this to the personality factors of the masculine and feminine roles, his point appears quite dubious (*Church Dogmatics*, III/4.54).

stands both under God's judgment as does every man and also under God's redeeming grace and love. Thus one presents the sexual deviant with a tension relationship involving both acceptance and encouragement to overcome his deviation. Jesus' attitude toward the woman caught in adultery in John 8 presents an excellent example of such responsibility.

Second, the Christian can and should approach the deviant with hope, for if the dynamics of deviant behavior outlined above are accurate, he may almost be considered prototypic of estranged humanity—acutely aware of his alienation from his fellow man and seeking acceptance and affection. If the good news be that Christ entered the world to reconcile man to God and his fellow man and to bring to him and the world God's love and true fellowship with other men, the Christian has a definite message for the sexual deviant. This is not to say, however, that the deviant will respond immediately and easily to this message; rather, it would seem that only through a relationship of loving acceptance and concern can the meaning of the Christian gospel become real to him. In Bonhoeffer's terms, our concern for the deviant must be penultimate rather than driving immediately for the ultimate commitment and reconciliation before Christ.[32] Note that to implement such an attitude the presence of the church as the community of the reconciled rather than a fringe institution is essential. Colin Williams suggests the church must now be ready to go into the world and witness there to God's reconciling message for all men as they seek to bring men into a reconciled fellowship.[33]

As possible areas in which the above guidelines for attitude may find expression in concrete action, A. A. Gross enumerates six: (1) the church may seek to help convicted homosexuals who have served out their sentences re-enter society within the context of acceptance and meaningful relationships; (2) the church may offer pastoral counseling for homosexuals; (3) proposals for legal reform may be developed through the church (e.g., *The Wolfenden Report* which was brought about by pressure from the Church of England[34]); (4) the minister or members of the church may be sensitive to the needs of the ac-

[32] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (Ed. E. Bethge; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953), pp. 125ff.

[33] Colin Williams, *What in the World?* (New York: National Council of the Churches of Christ, 1964), pp. 73ff.

[34] Bailey, pp. 174-176 presents laws in the United States concerning sexual deviants in regard to which the Christian might feel called to work for repeal or alteration.

cused sexual deviant during his trial; (5) of extreme importance is the opportunity and responsibility of the church to serve as an educational instrument, attempting to present those inside and outside of the church with a basic understanding of the causes of deviant behavior and the needs of the sexual deviant; and (6) as noted above, the church may offer its reconciliation to all.[35] As with the above guidelines for the Christian attitude toward the sexual deviant, these proposals for possible action are not claimed to be the responsibility of each Christian. Rather, the above list merely enumerates some possible avenues which the Christian's responsible action in his confrontation with the sexual deviant may take. It is the responsibility of each individual Christian to act in an unpredetermined way as he seeks to be man-the-answerer to the question with which the sexual deviant confronts him.

[35] Cf. Gross, pp. 119-122.

# THE CHALLENGE OF THE RESURRECTION

## An Interpretation of I Corinthians 15:58

BY C. CRAIG HALL

> Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (I Cor. 15:58).

THE purpose of this examination is to determine how I Corinthians 15:58 functions in the interpretation of the whole of chapter 15. This will involve an enquiry into the relation this verse bears to the chapter, and the hermeneutical significance which is implied by that relationship. By way of a general introduction, let us indicate two alternative ways of viewing the relationship. First, this verse may be seen to follow on the chapter's doctrinal exposition as a summation intended to shift the level of the discourse from doctrinal to practical grounds. On the other hand, this verse may be seen as an integral part of the chapter which functions as an indication of the chapter's comprehensive intent. It is our contention that the second of these alternatives better represents the function of verse 58. We will now undertake an examination of both views, as a method toward determining the correct relationship.

Most commentators see this verse specifically as a summation of what has gone before, in the sense that it draws legitimate practical implications from Paul's resurrection argument, and sets them forth concisely in an imperative statement. The verse is seen as an attempt by Paul to say, "This command can be obeyed because these facts can be trusted as authoritative." Because of the great assurance which Christians have from the resurrection, it is their duty to abide by, and, in fact, cherish this practical result. In other words, good conduct can be the expected product of the conviction which believers are to hold regarding the resurrection. Godet speaks eloquently for this manner of interpretation when he says, "Once [belief is] confirmed, their [the Corinthian Christians'] spiritual activity will unfold, flow over the edges all around."[1]

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[1] F. Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians,* Vol. II (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1887), p. 448.

Concurrent with this view concerning the function of verse 58 is the idea that in its context it serves as a device of transition. It is that vehicle employed by Paul to move deliberately from the doctrinal discussion to its practical implications. Hurd points out that Paul is reluctant to make sharp breaks in continuity, and verse 58 serves to guide the reader smoothly from the arguments of chapter 15 to the exhortations of the concluding chapter 16. Verse 58 may thus be considered as an introduction to 16:1.[2] By the method of implication, Paul is seen as moving between two quite different realms. Technically, verse 58 might be interpreted as an indication of the relationship existing between Paul's eschatology and his ethics. By setting forth the reward which God has sealed away for his disciples by the resurrection, Paul intends to encourage the members of the church to work together with greater diligence. By settling the controversy which has set the members against each other and relieving the personal distress which they might have felt concerning their dead, Paul has released them for the purpose of greater service. As they look forward to the request of 16:1, they need not fear that their labor will be in vain. There is much in this explanation which may appeal to us and seem legitimate, but we question whether it is a totally adequate explanation for the function of verse 58.[3]

Within the structure of this view the chapter is generally seen as a definitive doctrinal statement in which Paul outlines the Christian belief concerning the resurrection of Christ and the promise which this holds for those who belong to the faith which his resurrection has made possible. It is a polemic set in opposition to false beliefs which had gained popularity within the Corinthian church. Verse 58, as it follows this statement as an exhortation, is set apart from the state-

[2] J. C. Hurd, *The Origin of I Corinthians* (London: S.P.C.K., 1965) p. 89.

[3] Before proceeding in a critique of this view, it may be helpful to examine the use of the conjunction *hōste* ("therefore") for the purpose of defining what its use here might indicate regarding the structural relationship of verse 58 to what goes before. *Hōste* is generally used to indicate result, and is translated "for this reason," "therefore," or "so." Any of these could be used in the context of verse 58. The important matter is to recognize the kind of clause it introduces. Here it serves with an independent clause, and it is followed by the imperative (for other instances of this usage, cf. I Cor. 10:12; 11:33; 14:39; Phil. 2:12; I Thess. 4:18. In I Cor. 5:8 it functions similarly with the hortatory subjunctive). The implication of this is that we have here a command or obligation which follows from a preceding point, rather than a continuation or reinforcement within a singular argument. On these grounds alone, then, the view outlined above seems to be well founded.

ment itself. It is certainly related to the chapter, but must be understood as a different order of pronouncement. In rough terms, it is a step down from the clouds, which takes advantage of the belief engendered by the explanation, and guides the Corinthian church toward certain specific opportunities for service. The verse may contain clues concerning the purpose for which this section was written; it may be the logical step which follows from the chapter; in fact, it may, in a sense, be implied by the very content of the argument. But it is regarded as an essentially different kind of statement which indicates a definite shift in the level of discussion.

Our chief objection concerns the division which is seen to exist between the levels of discussion which are involved in the chapter as a whole and in this last verse. It is felt that this view, while not necessarily wrong as a stylistic analysis, cannot be understood as an adequate theological explanation, and could possibly, for that reason, serve to obscure some of the force of chapter 15 which verse 58 is intended to indicate. For the purposes of giving our argument direction, we would like to suggest the danger of pharisaism to which this interpretation opens us. When in the process of exegesis a definitive distinction is made between theological content and an act of faith, a division may be forced upon the text which is not implicit in its composition. By making this distinction for the purpose of determining some systematic outline of the material, we may bring our order to the text, rather than allowing the text to develop its themes in often disorderly, disproportionate ways. The danger of this method seems to be characterized here as the acts of faith are made to appear as merely logical resultants of an independent system of beliefs. The suggestion is that doctrine is an abstract reality apart from life, the implications of which, however, may be applied to life. This tends to reduce biblical ethics to moralistic legalism and is not true to the existential depths of such Pauline concepts as the "new creation" and "Christian freedom."

It is our intention to argue that we need not open ourselves to this danger, by demonstrating that verse 58 is not merely a practical implication drawn from a doctrinal definition, but that it is an integral part of the chapter's message and needs to be taken into account if this chapter is to be interpreted in its fullness. It functions to give the resurrection discussion its context, by helping to indicate the direction which the discussion is meant to take. We mean to say that it is a part of the total chapter, and by heeding its importance the exegete can more accurately determine the chapter's thrust.

Let us now take care to frame our examination within two considerations: the central theme of the book of I Corinthians and Paul's understanding of the importance of Christ's resurrection. The book as a whole, in developing its various points, is primarily directed toward what we Calvinists might loosely refer to as the "third" mark of the church: discipline. Paul writes to a church divided by controversy, and by attacking directly the points of contention, he is attempting to preserve its unity and purity. The church at Corinth is one which possesses many signs of the Spirit's power (1:4-9), and so he strives heartily to help its members come to grips with the problems incurred in sinful man's experience of the Christian life. To borrow the terminology of Professor Jeremias, Paul is confronted here by the dilemma imposed by life in the "gracious respite," God's gracious holding off of the Parousia. During this time before the consummation of God's kingdom the church must seek its mission and the form which its life together will take. As Deissmann insists, Paul hoped to witness the Parousia, and it is probable that the early church expected it would come "immediately."[4] But as time passed and the end was delayed, the church's problem of perpetuating its zealous unity became more acute, and disruptions evolved. As no clear doctrine of the resurrection had been formulated (witness the variety of emphasis in the Pauline, Synoptic and Johannine writings), it was natural that it should become a point of contention as it did in this letter. Thus, here we see Paul addressing himself to this difficult theological problem in order that the church need not be divided on so central an issue (15:4).

It should not be necessary to argue the point that in Paul's writings the primacy of the resurrection faith is affirmed. The resurrection is mentioned in all of his letters except II Thessalonians and Philemon, and in all it forms the undergirding force which gives his writing its power and substance. The important thing to note here is the relationship seen by Paul between Christ's resurrection and the new life which springs from it, which we shall call the Christian life. For Paul, the proclamation of the resurrection involved not the relating of a dogma, but the communication of a supreme fact of experience. As Barclay states, "To Paul the fact of the resurrection meant the greatest thing in all the world; it meant that all life is lived in the presence of the love and the power of Jesus Christ."[5] Robertson claims, "The Resurrection . . . is the source of our life as members of Christ, and the guarantee of our hope in him."[6] It is thus that Paul claims we have nothing if Christ has not been raised (15:14-19).

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[4] Paul A. Deissmann, *A Study in Social and Religious History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 217.

The resurrection is the ultimate sign of life, for Christ challenged death in the crucifixion and emerged the victor. By this act life in communion with the victor is freely brought to the believer (cf. Rom. 5:4; 6:22; 10:9; II Cor. 3:4; 4:14; Eph. 1:19-20; Col. 1:22; 2:6-7) and sealed as the believer confirms his identity with the crucifixion and resurrection in baptism (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). By this identity Paul sees himself as stamped with the *stigmata* of Christ (II Cor. 4:10ff; Gal. 6:7), and a bearer of his suffering (II Cor. 1:5). In the same way all believers share this experience as they endure afflictions for their identity with the gospel, but also as they share the ultimate victory (cf. Rom. 5:3; I Cor. 1:18-31; II Cor. 1:7; Gal. 6:14; Phil. 3:10; I Thess. 3:5). Thus the life in faith is a single experience and hope lies within the present reality. The presence of the living Lord is the Christian's guarantee that his future is secured. Moreover, the life now is one of service and labor as it is bound with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The believer is shouldered with the proclamation of the resurrection and becomes *doulos* ("servant," cf. Rom. 1:1; I Cor. 4:1; 9:19; II Cor. 3:6; 4:5; 6:4; 11:23; Gal. 1:10; Phil. 1:1) after the fashion of his Lord (Rom. 15:8; Phil. 2:7). Because of the resurrection, the Christian is caught up in the gospel's service; he will suffer for its sake, but because his Lord is with him always, he shares in the final victory.

It is within the framework of these understandings that we must unfold the language of verse 58. As we are here concerned with the matter of the resurrection, we must inform our interpretation with Paul's understanding of it as well as with the force of the immediate context. The *adelphoi* ("brothers") are those united with Paul in the new life of the resurrected Lord, and who join with him in the mission of the community which springs from its life, in this case, as it is manifested in Corinth. A victory has been assured, so they become

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[5] W. Barclay, *The Mind of St. Paul* (London: Collins, 1958) p. 120.

[6] A. Robertson, *First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1911) p. xxxvii.

*hedraioi* ("steadfast") and *ametakinētoi* ("immovable"), for the new life which has come is one in which they have a share, in which they participate. This participation engages the community in its own *kopos* ("labor") which is the labor and exertion of an obedient people, people who have submitted to the resurrected Lord. Theirs is the task of spreading the kerygma which Paul has outlined in 15:3-8, the message of victory sealed by God in the resurrection. They may stand knowing that their labor is not in vain, not spent on an illusion but grounded in the presence of God.

In this sense verse 58 carries through the force of 15:1-11 by determining the direction in which the chapter is aimed. The "doctrinal" section is not meant to stand apart from and above the exhortations which are delivered, but together they form an inseparable promise which witnesses to the gospel in such a way that men are challenged by the living Lord. Paul affirms that the life of faith comes through the preaching of the word (v. 1) which is responded to by men touched with grace. The crucifixion-resurrection event is the heart of this proclamation (vv. 3-8), for by overcoming death Christ can offer us life. By the confession of verse 8 we see that this matter is not passed on as rote fact but that it is experienced, and that for Paul this experience becomes part of the proclamation. The hearers are to share this experience and to bear fruit as the risen Lord works in them. This is emphasized in that verse 10 forms a parallel to verse 58, for both Paul and the Corinthian community as workers in Christ are involved in a life of "exceeding" work. The exhortation, then, becomes a gracious promise and not merely an ethical command which the believer is obliged to follow as he would the law. But because the believer now lives in the light of God's graciousness, he ventures to announce confidence in his future resurrection. Or more precisely, the life which he knows in Christ is a total experience: his past, present and future are bound together in the Lord who transcends time by his victory over the last enemy.

The image for atonement which Paul employs here is that of victory, forcefully illuminated in verses 20-28. Christ is the first fruits of the conquest, and his church is to follow as it is marked with his stigma and gathered to the Kingdom of God. But if God has not actually effected this victory, Paul has nothing to say. Their lives are illusions (vv. 14, 17), and they are in the predicament which they had escaped. They are to be pitied (v. 19) for they are perpetuating the cruelest hoax of all: proclaiming a hope which can only end in despair, as Christians discover their lives have been invested in a dream. If, then, the church represents these contradictions and is ignorant of the resurrection, let it forget the whole business and live it up (v. 32), for there is nothing which can grasp it and make it a new kingdom. Paul goes on to affirm again that Christians need not live in this ignorance, but as they belong to Christ, the first fruits, they may trust that they too will be "changed" and will inherit the Kingdom of God (v. 50). It is within this trust that they face the dilemma of the eschatological respite; some may fall asleep, some will not; but faith gives them confidence that the victory is God's (v. 57).

This is the emphasis which may shine brightly from the chapter as we give attention to the guidance provided by verses 1-11, and 58. We are to know that Paul is concerned with the meaning of the Christian life as seen within the context of the church, not with idle speculations of the future. He does not attempt an escape from the present in order to engage in a fanciful enthusiasm regarding things to come. Rather he knows that what is to come can only be seen within the vision which God brings now. The chapter proclaims confidence in the resurrection, in the hope of silencing foolish controversies about its details. It is not a treasure of proof-texts regarding the chronology of the Parousia, or the form of our "spiritual" bodies; nor does he attempt petty moralisms which can be justified by doctrinal argument. Our duty as exegetes, then, is to remain faithful, as does Paul, to the promise of life which we have in Christ. It is by acknowledging that Christ, the first fruits, brings the victory, that we witness to the challenge of new life which the resurrection raises against the lives men fashion for themselves.

# HAVE YOU SEEN OLD ELI LATELY?

## BY LARRY L. LIGO

> Now Jesus was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marveled (Luke 11:14).

And why shouldn't they marvel? Here was old Eli who had lived his entire life in their midst. They had seen him hundreds of times shuffling down to the market-place, where he would sit all day and watch as the merchants haggled vigorously over the price of the salted fish they had brought over from the lake, or the honey-cured figs from the south. They all knew him there in the market-place; and when the day of business ended, they would give him odd jobs that really did not need doing. They knew him all right, and they knew where he lived, too: on the edge of town, in the loft of the stable near the road to Nazareth. Many of them wondered why he had not come shuffling in today as usual. And then they heard. That morning a stranger had entered their village, and as he stopped to drink he began talking to some of the women there at the well. As he spoke, the men on their way to the marketplace paused to listen. Eli had been attracted by the crowd. And now he was speaking and laughing and just listening, for the first time, to the noises of the village as it wakened from the slumber of night. Those who saw him marveled.

So would we if we had been there, for a true miracle had taken place. The power of God had been revealed in such an obvious way. If only such miracles occurred today, if only God continued to reveal himself in the same way, we could readily believe. Or could we? There is something about that incident by the well that does not quite ring true. If God had been revealed in such an obvious way, why were there some who stood there oblivious to what had happened? Why did some say that this was the work of Satan, and others claim that nothing had happened at all. Why did they fail to see the change in old Eli? Is it possible that even if we had been there, the change

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would have taken place without our awareness? Now follow this line of thought far enough, and you are brought face to face with the present situation. What if God is still revealing himself in the world today as remarkably as he did then, but we simply fail to see? What if he is revealing himself in countless ways, but our eyes are clamped tightly shut? Is it possible that we fumble around in self-imposed darkness, searching for the reality that is all around us? It may be the result of our insensitivity to what is really taking place which causes us to close our eyes to the remarkable changes we find in countless thousands of Elis every day of our lives. You know, even John the Baptist had that same problem. This same John who looked up from the murky waters of the Jordan River and boldly proclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world," was later to send messengers from his prison cell with the hesitant question, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

Perhaps we need to review once again the answer which John received as he stood there impatiently staring at the walls of his prison cell waiting for the Messiah to come crashing through, winnowing fork in hand. Jesus did not come to free him; in fact, he did not come near Herod or his prison except once—in the middle of the night long after John had already left. This Jesus of Nazareth was never one to answer a question directly. His words point not to himself, but rather to the events which were taking place—to the signs that establish what God is doing—to show how God is revealing himself. And the words come back to us as they came back to John, ". . . the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed." He could just as easily have added, "and the dumb speak." For that is precisely what had happened that morning by the well.

But when we picture such things as these we clamp our eyes even more tightly shut. This talk of demons and exorcism is totally incongruous in today's world. Stories like that might be all right for small children, but you certainly cannot expect a mature mind to believe any such nonsense. Perhaps the reason for our sophistication is that from the vantage point of two thousand years of scientific progress it becomes easy for us to cast a disdainful eye upon all references to being possessed. How ridiculous that language seems to us who have learned to throw around such words as "psychosomatic" and "mental block." "It's psychological," we say.

But whether or not a man who had once been dumb received the power of speech is not the important point. The important thing for us, as it was for some of them, is that a tremendous change had taken place in old Eli. He was no longer the man who shuffled along the streets with down-cast eyes and thoughts turned only in upon himself. Something had happened to him: the transforming love of God had been revealed to him, and his entire countenance had been altered. Something had happened much more miraculous than simply giving a man speech when he previously had been dumb: his very heart had been changed. His was not just a superficial change; his entire personality had been turned inside out. In fact it may be that the miracle which really took place here was not the granting of speech to someone who was dumb, but rather the freeing of a man from himself, so that he could be interested in speaking with others. How else do you explain the fact that some of those who stood in the crowd did not recognize what was taking place? If it had been the granting of speech where it had been physically impossible, everyone would have noticed.

Somehow, we have the ability to notice the obvious things, those that exist only on the surface. Perhaps it is because that is where we live—only on the surface. Christ is aware of the superficial way in which we tend to observe the world around us, and that is the reason he says, "Blessed is he that takes no offense at me." He knows that the activities in which he is engaged do not suit any popular or traditional views of what he should be doing. Instead of coming as king with all the pomp and circumstance with which we would have him play his role, he comes unobtrusively, pushed and jostled by the crowd of a picket line or quietly weeping with those who have lost loved ones in Vietnam. And since he does not reveal himself in the way we want him to, we often conclude that he has not come. If he wanted to make his presence felt, he would take the world by the scruff of the neck and make us listen instead of expecting us to hear his quiet tapping on the door of our hearts. How does he expect us to hear over the roar of a world which pulls and tugs us in a hundred different directions at once? Perhaps he doesn't; just as he does not expect us to hear our own breathing unless we listen for it. Yet he is here asking so much more than we can give that we turn from him to avoid acknowledging our moral impotence and failure. We do the very thing he begs us not to do: we take offense at him. Is there anything more frightening than seeing the truth about ourselves?

Why is it that only on rare occasions does his truth get through to us? If God is revealing himself as he claims, why is it that we do not see him? Why is our picture of the true nature of God's revelation so terribly out of focus? Possibly a hint of the answer can be found in the crowd which stood around Eli there by the village well.

How many times have we thought, "If only he would show me a sign! If only I could see, just once, beyond the shadow of a doubt that the kingdom has come, that God is really at work revealing himself, I wouldn't have any trouble giving myself entirely to him." Is it possible that we seek a sign from heaven because we do not see the signs of heaven all around us? Perhaps we are unable to see Christ at work because we have not taken the time to look deeply enough. We are tempted to look for him only in official worship services, when we are in the midst of his faithful people, and so we fall into the same trap as they fell into that day as they stood around Christ. After all, they were not in church; in fact, this was not even the Sabbath. They were standing down by the well only a few streets from the marketplace. Nothing could have been further from their minds than the manner in which God reveals himself; and all the time they were looking directly upon God incarnate.

They had succumbed to one of the most dangerous heresies of all time, one which is still running rampant throughout the world: we still have a tendency to make religion a queer and abnormal thing, rather than the natural response to the deepest implications of our common life. We fail to realize that the incarnation is not just God in the form of man, but it is also religion in the form of life. Worship is not a strange variety of excitement which takes us momentarily out of the world; it is the moment of deepening sensitivity to the profound, subtle meanings of the world. It is appreciation raised to its highest power; it is our answer to the mystery and beauty which overwhelm us. We do not need to wear long faces or see mysterious signs to witness God's revealed presence; we have only to live deeply and sensitively enough to recognize the many signs we have. We do not see old Eli because we do not take the trouble.

The groups who stood there as Eli's life was filled with the power of emancipating love are still with us. There are those who reject the reality of God's revelation because they fail to see the thing which has taken place in old Eli, and there are others who fail to attribute to God the changes which they do observe. Yet countless thousands of Elis come shouting and singing into every day of our lives. Their procession is endless. As we look back over our shoulders to the days, weeks, and even years that have gone by, we can see them in events, people, ideas, and coincidences that have brought us to where we are. We can see where as they passed by they stepped out of line momentarily to grab us by the scruff of the neck, to push here or to pull there, to spin us around and start us going in entirely different directions. We see them opening some doors and closing others. But as we turn around to face the present the picture becomes blurred; as we try to focus our gaze on the road ahead, the view becomes unintelligible. And why shouldn't it? In order to see what lies ahead, we would have to forfeit our freedom, and that is contrary to our nature and to God's. But this is not to say that our view of the present cannot be brought into sharper focus if only we could come to understand the barrier that keeps us from responding to God's revelation.

If we turn our attention once again to the conversation at the well, we find Christ proclaiming with undeniable clarity why we do not recognize that which is taking place as the revelation of God. "He who is not with me is against me, and who does not gather with me scatters." At first glance we have no quarrel with that, in fact nothing could be more obvious; and therefore we do all we can to become a gatherer. Or do we? Do we really attempt to be conscious gatherers with Christ? Or do we simply go along most of the time doing all we can to keep the boat from rocking? And then when the water all around us gets a little rough, rather than putting out our oars and straining at the task, we so often let them hang unattended. We sit there petrified, with our fingers tightly clenching the sides of the boat, praying that this too will pass. It often does, or at least it seems to. The water becomes calm, so we offer a prayer of gratitude; and completely oblivious to the fact that during the storm the boat has been turned around, we take up the oars again and begin straining in the wrong direction. This is the fallacy of neutrality.

To be a gatherer is to be a reconciler of men to God and to one another, a builder of mutuality, unity and peace, a creator of human good. To be against him is to be a scatterer, a breeder or carrier of hatred and division, a destroyer. We cannot avoid being one or the other. The reason we cannot remain neutral is really quite simple. You and I have been created in such a way that we must belong to someone or something. We are not self-sufficient and independent beings. If we make no active attempt to fill our lives with that to which we wish to belong, something else will soon claim our allegiance. We have been created to belong to God, and if we do not give ourselves to him, we give ourselves to someone or something else. Either we worship God or we worship idols.

> When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none he says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when he comes he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first (Luke 11:24-26).

This is the danger of emptiness. It was not enough for Eli to be healed by the emancipating love of Christ, for this would simply have left the house of his life swept clean and ready to be repossessed. He had to recognize the love which had been revealed to him and live with that love as master of his life.

This is why we so often fail to respond to God's revelation. We fail to see the finger of God at work; or when we see it moving over the land, we are unable to recognize its source. We have eyes, but somehow they do not see. Perhaps for a brief moment somewhere back there we were able to catch just a glimpse through that smoke-screen of self-importance that always surrounds us. It might have been as we paused on a cold December evening to listen as the snow drifted noiselessly to the ground. Or as we took a handful of sand and let it drift through our fingers while the crashing surf unleashed its fury. Perhaps it was as you held your first child, and as you looked at that squirming miracle of life, you could see momentarily through your tears of joy the revealed presence of Christ. During those moments when we catch a glimpse of a presence of God, *he* is not doing anything different; *we* are. We are responding by living deeply enough. Have *you* seen old Eli lately? Have you *looked*?

# RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF EMILE DURKHEIM

## BY WARREN WIGGINS

WHILE sociology in the twentieth century has not been oriented toward history, its roots lie deep within the matrix of socio-historical thinking from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All modern sociology has developed from these roots through the continual refinement of methodology, terminology, and goals, but the essential marks of its nature follow general lines laid down carefully by earlier leaders. Emile Durkheim, one of the most prominent men in the history of French sociology, has exerted extensive influence upon the sociologists who have chronologically followed him in all parts of the world. For Durkheim no apology need be made for the continually renewed interest manifested in all of his work.

The object of this paper is to discover the degree of impact which religion and/or religious context had upon Durkheim's sociological thinking. While based on the sociologically demonstrated principle that ideas are part of the total interacting forces within a culture, this study is actually set within the discipline of intellectual history or the history of ideas. The attempt is not to demonstrate a theory of causation in this matter, but to show forth the relevant factors of noticeable influence. The aim is not to present a total view of the origins of Durkheim's thought, but simply to delineate the impact of religious factors upon his thinking.

Undertaking such a study demands first a workable definition of "religion." Durkheim certainly offered his view of religion, and in forming the basic structure of this paper some attention must be given to his formulation:

> A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.[1]

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[1] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* trans. Joseph Ward Swain (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1954), p. 47 (henceforth, *Elementary Forms*).

Although there are obvious merits in using this definition, yet to investigate fully his work and the influence of religion upon him, it is necessary to consider some more contemporary definitions of religion. Following a long discussion of the problems involved in doing this, Milton Yinger defines religion as "a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with these ultimate problems of human life," the ultimate problems referred to including death, meaning beyond suffering, uncontrollable forces, hostility, and egocentricity.[2] Talcott Parsons offers a more extensive view with perhaps a narrower scope when he defines a religion as including: a set of beliefs concerning sacred entities, a system of expressive symbols, prescribed activities, a sense of "we-ness," and the view that man's relation to the supernatural is linked to moral values, goals, and rules of conduct.[3]

The combined force of these comments and chosen definitions should lead to an understanding of religion which involves belief structure, moral statements, and cultic practices of worship. Within the specific context of this paper, the influences of religion upon Durkheim will include Christianity and Judaism. For traces of influences within his work all aspects of the religious will be examined, including personal beliefs and practices, methodological presuppositions, organizational methods, scope of concern, and ultimate conclusions from his investigations.

## I

Emile Durkheim was born in 1858 into a family well established in a tradition of rabbinical scholarship. He himself was destined for a life in the rabbinate and early began his training in Hebrew, the Old Testament, the Talmud, and Hebraic lore.[4] A noticeable trace of religious influences arising from this period of his life was his careful use of biblical references in many of his writings. In the *Division of Labor* he refers to the Bible nearly fifty times and in the *Incest* ten times.

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[2] J. Milton Yinger, *Religion, Society and the Individual* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1957), p. 9.

[3] Talcott Parsons, "Sociology and Social Psychology" in H. N. Fairchild (ed.) *Religious Perspectives in College Teaching* (New York: 1952), pp. 289-291.

[4] Henri Peyre, "Durkheim: man, his time, and his intellectual background." Kurt H. Wolff (ed.) *Emile Durkheim 1858-1917* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1960), p. 8; Harry Alpert, *Emile Durkheim and His Sociology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 15.

In his early schooling Durkheim for a short time came under the tutelage of a Catholic woman and began to evidence some inclination toward a mystical form of Catholicism. The fascination soon evaporated—partially because of the Catholic instructress herself—and Durkheim became an agnostic for the remainder of his life. In spite of this, he continued to remember and respect his early life "and frequently had occasion to recall to his colleagues of the *Année Sociologique* that he was, after all, the son of a rabbi."[5]

Although the relationship is again quite tenuous there has also been a suggestion that Durkheim's early training under Judaism might be responsible for his aversion to value judgments found in the sociology of ethics, politics or religion.[6] He dispassionately gives evidence to this effect in some of the opening comments in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*: "There is no occasion for asking here whether or not there are scholars who have merited this reproach, and who have made religious history and ethnology a weapon against religion. In any case, a sociologist cannot hold such a point of view."[7] Certainly such evidence adds little weight to the consideration that religion influenced Durkheim's sociology.

During Durkheim's thirteenth year, France experienced the horrors of the Franco-Prussian War, a conflict which brought to the surface again many of the unsettling questions raised nearly a century before in the Great Revolution. The church and religion were part of the old, established order which were swept away by the reaction to the humiliating defeat. In seeing the death of the old religious order, Durkheim's deep concern was for the moral fabric of society that must continue even though revealed religion had been swept aside. Although this pursuit only gradually became self-realized and explicit, it is strange to ponder how deeply engrained such a concern must have been in the family background out of which he came.

The long, gentle process by which Durkheim moved from his first premonitions of building a new moral unity in the Third Republic to the point of specifically declaring such to be his aim was largely a process of involvement with certain key figures who represent some type of religious orientation toward the problem with which he was concerned.

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[5] Alpert, p. 15.

[6] Charles A. Ellwood, *A History of Social Philosophy* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1944), pp. 426-427.

[7] *Elementary Forms,* p. 2.

The first author who must inevitably be discussed in relation to Durkheim's intellectual development is Auguste Comte. Quite dissatisfied with the literary dilettantism and philosophical abstractions which he had met as a student, Durkheim turned willingly to the radical positivism which had come to him through Comte and Spencer.[8] He clearly distinguished for himself what was valuable in this tradition and sought to avoid Comte's dogmatism and pomposity and especially his investigation of social facts through the philosophy of history. Even with all these hesitations and qualifications Durkheim concluded, "a vivid feeling of social reality is ever present in Comte's works. No better initiation to sociology exists."[9]

A proper investigation of Durkheim's relations with Comte soon forces the conclusion that there is nothing here so narrow as a one-to-one influence, and soon the scope of the relationship broadens into two areas where Comte himself admittedly found many important ideas—Saint Simon and the Catholic anti-revolutionaries such as Bonald, Maistre, and Lammenais. Of Saint Simon, Durkheim happily stated that "with him a new conception [of the laws of social life] appeared. . . . He was the first to offer the formula for it, to declare that human societies are realities."[10]

When Durkheim's mature thought is compared with that of Bonald, to choose one of the conservative Christians, there appear at least half a dozen strong correlations. To both society is an entity and reality which exists over and above mere individuals or the grouping of them. The heart of this society furthermore is moral, and the individual depends morally and psychologically upon society for his being and existence. In religion, and more especially in the values of the sacred, both men find the basic constituent of the history of society. Out of religion have come furthermore the very values, ideas, and even categories of thought which men use. Within the society itself, both emphasized the need for authority whether on the level of the state, of individuals, or of groups standing between these. Finally both of them were very much involved in proposing that it was in the development of medium sized groups—the family in Bonald and the professional group in Durkheim—that society could most effectively see the resurrection of authority and moral unity.[11] Such an extended and basic set of correlations serves to demonstrate how large a role the conservative Catholic tradition played in Durkheim's thought even though he was not from the tradition and even refused to continue in his own specifically religious heritage.

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[8] Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought* 1890-1930 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), p. 279.

[9] Peyre, p. 24.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[11] Robert A. Nisbet, *Emile Durkheim* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 25-26; "Bonald," pp. 322-323.

To draw this conclusion from the material presented does not indicate that Durkheim consciously borrowed thoughts from any particular man. This tradition was in large measure mediated to him through the work of de Tocqueville and Fustel de Coulanges. In the latter's classic work on *The Ancient City* (1874) social relationships such as marriage, and social institutions of all types such as legal matters, derived from sacredness. "The heart of religion, Fustel emphasized, is not belief or faith or external authority, but the idea of the sacred."[12] To cast a glance quickly at Durkheim's own conclusions: "In summing up, then, it may be said that nearly all the great social institutions have been born in religion,"[13]—and of course the distinguishing mark of religion is the sacred.

Durkheim's concern for the moral revival of the France he loved drew strong support from the works of two philosophers whose works he read. The philosopher Renan (a philologist and historian in self-chosen exile from an ecclesiastical career) followed partially in the tradition of Hegel's idealism in that he declared that religion was solidly a part of human existence and not a passing phenomenon now that the age of science had arrived. He wished at the same time to provide for ethics a solid foundation in science and rejected the claims of the supernatural.[14] Such ideas provided welcome confirmation of many thoughts advanced by Durkheim himself.

The other philosopher, Renouvier, was a French Neo-Kantian whom Durkheim met through books while attending the École Normal Supérieure. He sought to remove philosophy from its time-honored association with literature and place it alongside science. Ethics were a basic concern to him and these he sought as much through science as through any speculative use of reason. He was committed to the moral reconstruction of the Third Republic, convinced that "a fundamental, if not *the* fundamental moral concept of modern society is the dignity of the human personality."[15] Although Renouvier attempted to arouse France through a broadened form of Protestantism and not something strictly secular, still his basic purpose was not lost upon Durkheim.[16] It must be stressed at this point, in opposition somewhat to that which has just been stated and implied, that Durkheim was concerned for the establishment of a *science* of morality, a *science* of human behavior. Durkheim drew out the implications of this as follows: "Science explains what is; it does not create things. It cannot by itself endow morality with properties that morality lacked altogether."[17] How important this scientific approach was to Durkheim reveals itself in Durkheim's answer to a question addressed to him at a philosophical conference in 1906: "The most elementary caution obliges us to consider as altogether suspect the image which each of us constructs of his own moral conscience."[18]

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[12] Nisbet, pp. 75-76.

[13] *Elementary Forms,* p. 418.

[14] Peyre, pp. 28-30.

[15] Alpert, p. 27.

Durkheim's slow movement toward a definite aim in life was aided in the short period following his graduation from the École Normale by Louis Liard, Directeur de l'Enseignement Supérieur (Minister of Higher Education). Not only did Liard feel that only the "universal methods of science" could offer a sound basis for the moral reconstruction of the Third Republic—a goal toward which Durkheim was slowly beginning to work—but it was also he who encouraged Durkheim to make a study trip to Germany in early 1886. Thoroughly fascinated with their treatment of moral facts as empirical data and their attempts to establish an independent science of ethics, Durkheim finally declared his own specific aims in a report which he published on this trip in early 1888: "Of all the branches of sociology, the science of ethics is the one which attracts us by preference and which will command our attention first of all."[19] The decision was by no means an empty promise, for Durkheim declared in 1900 that "he had limited his researches—except for necessary excursions into bordering domains—to the study of juridical and moral rules either in their development and genesis by means of history and comparative ethnography, or in their functioning by means of statistics."[20] In conclusion at this point it can easily be said that although Durkheim's

[16] Peyre, pp. 25-26.

[17] Emile Durkheim, *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education* (The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 105 (henceforth *Moral Education*).

[18] Joseph Meyer, "Individualism and Socialism in Durkheim," Kurt H. Wolff (ed.) *Emile Durkheim, 1858-1917* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1960), p. 35.

[19] Emile Durkheim, "Cours de science sociale: Leon d'overture," *Revue Internationale de l'Enseignement*, XV (1888), 45; cited in Alpert, p. 42.

[20] Emile Durkheim, "La Sociologie en France au xix$^{e}$ siècle," *Revue Bleue* XIII, p. 648; cited in Alpert, p. 53.

interest in morals was not exclusively from one source, certainly his Jewish home background and his association intellectually with a conservative Christian tradition filled a decisive role among the major forces directing him this way.

## II

In order to understand more accurately the many allusions made above to the ways in which Durkheim's view of morality had strong affinity with religious sources and in order to demonstrate more accurately the degree to which religious influences were important to his understanding of morality, a short exposition of Durkheim's moral theory is now undertaken. Durkheim's method, as was stated above, is scientific above all and calls for the elimination of all morality derived from revealed religion. He cautions, however, that "if we begin to eliminate everything religious from the traditional system without providing any substitute, we run the risk of also eliminating essential moral ideas and sentiments."[21] Therefore "it is necessary to discover rational substitutes for those religious conceptions which have so long served as the vehicle for the most essential ideas of morality."[22] In other words, according to Everett Wilson, Durkheim is looking for a functional equivalent of Catholicism.[23]

If such is to be the program of investigation, the first question is what is truly moral among the many elements found within religious morality. Durkheim identifies two factors: "First of all, in associating morality with a transcendental power religion has made the authority inherent in moral precepts easily represented." Secondly "God is not only conceived of as a lawmaker and the guardian of the moral order; he also represents an ideal which the individual strives to realize." "All that we needed was to substitute for the conception of a supernatural being the empirical idea of a directly observable being, which is society." As proof from one angle that this is possible he points out how many great religions have not relied upon other-worldly sanctions to enforce their morality; "this was the case with Judaism until a very recent point in its history."[24]

[21] *Moral Education,* p. 19.

[22] Emile Durkheim, "*L'éducation morale,* p. 10, cited in Melvin Richter, "Durkheim's Politics and Political Theory," Kurt H. Wolff (ed.) *Emile Durkheim, 1858-1917* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1960), p. 175.

[23] Everett K. Wilson in preface to *Moral Education,* p. xxv.

[24] *Moral Education,* pp. 104-105.

The exact method for approaching this task is predicated upon the emergence even within religion of a slow separation of religion and morality. Durkheim demonstrates to his satisfaction how the coming of Christianity brought morality to a prominent place of its own within religion and lifted it out of the insignificant role given to it by primitive peoples. Later with Protestantism "the autonomy of morality is still more accentuated by the fact that ritual diminishes."[25] To arrive at moral ideals the task is first to describe moral facts and their "conditions and consequences" and then to extract the core ideals which can be used as a guide to future action. In this way all a priori ideals are laid aside.[26] In *The Division of Labor in Society* he stated his purpose in light of this method quite clearly: "This book is pre-eminently an attempt to treat the facts of the moral life according to the method of the positive sciences."[27] As a result of this method Durkheim believed he gained an added advantage over morality founded on a religious base. Instead of being paralyzed and immovable, morality was now a function of society and was therefore free to adjust properly to the type of morality needed under specific situations.[28] At this point it might be conceded that the only religious influence evident might be a vague interest in morals as such, but certainly nothing more.

Durkheim's method as such becomes much more understandable if it is considered in light of his definitions for a few terms that are of key importance here. Social facts, to Durkheim, consist of "ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him."[29] In light of this definition "moral facts consist of rules of action recognizable by certain distinctive characters."[30] The distinctive characteristics which Durkheim singles out for constant discussion and application are explained in his lecture on "The Determination of Moral Facts":

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

[26] Morris Ginsburg, "Durkheim's Ethical Theory," Robert A. Nisbet, *Emile Durkheim* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 142.

[27] Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. George Simpson (The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960), p. 32 (henceforth *Division of Labor*).

[28] Cf. *Moral Education*, p. 106.

[29] Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. Sarah A. Solovay & John H. Mueller (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1950), p. 3.

[30] Emile Durkheim "De la Division du travail social: Étude sur l'organisation des sociétés supérieures" (Paris: Alcan), p. xxxvii; cited in Charles Elmer Gehlke, *Emile Durkheim's Contributions to Sociological Theory* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1915), p. 153.

"Obligation or duty only expresses one aspect abstracted from morality. A certain degree of desirability is another characteristic no less important than the first."[31] Obligation or duty is found to be present in moral facts on the basis of "empirical analysis," but in most of mankind, "when authority is involved and men experience the imperative they know as conscience they attribute it to superhuman power. However, it is society inculcated into them."[32] Desirability comes from the fact that society not only demands certain things of individuals, but also has educated its members by this inculcation of its own ideals so that individuals recognize the demands of society as desirable to satisfy their own goals and ends. This idea will soon appear again in a discussion of education.

Two final facts or ideas need to be noted with relation to Durkheim's definitional structure. First, Durkheim indirectly shows the absolute necessity of morality when he claims that "each vital fact —and a moral fact is vital—cannot endure if it is not of some use, if it does not answer some need."[33] The absolute position which Durkheim attributes to morality reveals itself even more in a pamphlet written during the First World War when he said that "there is something which is generally accepted as superior to the State: this is morality. Morality is no doubt merely a matter of ideas; but these ideas are forces which move and dominate men."[34]

With this background it is now possible to outline more accurately those areas mentioned above wherein Durkheim showed a strong positive identity with Bonald and the Catholic conservatives. On the one hand, Durkheim was totally convinced that moral powers and forces arose out of society itself and impinged upon individuals both from the outside and from the internalized form of conscience within. Morality, he said quite bluntly, "results from life in common."[35] "It is society itself which, to the degree that it is firmly established, has drawn from within itself those great moral forces before which man has felt his inferiority."[36] As one example of how Durkheim used this idea in practice one might say that the positive aim of *The Division*

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[31] Emile Durkheim, "The Determination of Moral Facts" in *Sociology and Philosophy,* trans. D. F. Pocock (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1953), p. 36.

[32] *Moral Education,* pp. 89-90.

[33] *Division of Labor,* p. 35.

[34] Emile Durkheim, "L'Allemagne au-dessous de tout: la mentalité allemande et la guerre" (Paris: Colin), p. 18; cited in Alpert, p. 74.

[35] Emile Durkheim, *Education and Sociology,* trans. Sherwood D. Fox (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1956), p. 76.

[36] *Ibid.,* 125.

*of Labor in Society* was "to demonstrate that specialization in modern societies is a moral duty."[37] Durkheim maintains the point that morality comes from society and not from great individuals by stating that "for most of their fellow citizens, Christ and Socrates were immoral and were not accorded any authority by them."[38]

An alternative way of stating this same theme in Durkheim's thought is to call society the object of morality. In *The Division of Labor in Society* Durkheim called attention to the fact that "society is not . . . a stranger to the moral world or something which has only secondary repercussions upon it. . . . Let all social life disappear and moral life will disappear with it, since it would no longer have any objective."[39] Indeed, "if a morality exists, it can only have as object the group formed by the associated individuals—that is to say, society."[40] Thus society is both the ground and the goal of morality. Morality for its existence depends totally upon society.

On the other hand, there is a definite view in Durkheim that society cannot exist without morality. This is the point at which the religious influences appear to have their greatest effect. Almost as if by way of definition, Durkheim states: "Every society is a moral society."[41] Interpreted, this means: "The characteristic of moral rules is that they enunciate the fundamental conditions of social solidarity. . . . Everything which is a source of solidarity is moral, everything which forces man to take account of other men is moral, everything which forces him to regulate his conduct through something other than the striving of his ego is moral, and morality is as solid as these ties are numerous and strong."[42]

In his introduction to the second edition of *The Division of Labor in Society* Durkheim demonstrated how the rise of economic interests to the forefront of society coupled with the lack of morality in the economic area had led to a general demoralization of society.[43] Talcott Parsons showed how deeply this view of Durkheim's cut into all social relations when he stated that "not merely contractual relations but stable social relations in general and even the personal equilibrium of the members of a social group are seen to be dependent on the existence of a normative structure in relation to conduct."[44] From Durkheim's basic views it follows that "man is a moral being only because he lives in society, since morality consists in being solidary with a group and varying with this solidarity."[45]

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[37] Alpert, p. 20.

[38] *Moral Education,* pp. 90-91.

[39] *Division of Labor,* p. 399.

[40] "The Determination of Moral Facts," *Sociology and Philosophy,* p. 37.

[41] *Division of Labor,* p. 228.

[42] *Ibid.,* p. 398.

[43] *Ibid.,* pp. 1-4.

In light of these views on society and morality and in light of Durkheim's desire to provide a secular morality for France's Third Republic it is not surprising to discover that he has a deep concern for education. As a rising young educator in 1887 he questioned his colleagues: "In truth is it not astounding that we make such little effort to enlighten opinion when it is the sovereign power among us?"[46] He indulged in great detail in explaining what education could accomplish:

> Society finds itself, with each new generation, faced with a *tabula rasa*, very nearly, on which it must build anew. To the egoistic and asocial being that has just been born it must, as rapidly as possible, add another, capable of leading a moral and social life. Such is the work of education, and you can readily see its great importance. It is not limited to developing the individual organism in the direction indicated by its nature, to elicit the hidden potentialities that need only to be manifested. It creates in man a new being.[47]

In addition to all the corollaries of thought drawn out in detail above it is instructive to note in this quotation that Durkheim is concerned to convert a man from egoism to altruism in some form just as Comte and the Catholic anti-revolutionaries.

## III

Durkheim's aim to secularize morals and to use ethics in the regeneration of France under the Third Republic cannot obscure the fact that he also had a profound interest in religion as such. Apart from any home influences the beginnings of this interest of Durkheim can be traced to the librarian at the École Normale, Lucien Herr, who "directed Durkheim's attention to Frazer's articles on totemism and thus evoked in the young sociologist the interest in the phenomena of primitive religion."[48] In an 1886 article in the *Revue Philosophique* Durkheim included a long discussion of Spencer's theory of religion, but it was not until the late 1890's that Durkheim's concern for this area began to develop noticeably.[49]

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[44] Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937), p. 378.

[45] *Division of Labor*, p. 399.

[46] Emile Durkheim, "La philosophie dans les universités allemandes," *Revue Internationale de l'Enseignement*, XIII (1887), p. 440; cited in Alpert, p. 40.

[47] *Education and Sociology*, p. 72.

[48] Alpert, p. 37.

The real turning point for Durkheim came in 1895. He himself related this significant event over a decade later:

> It was only in 1895 that I had a clear understanding of the capital role played by religion in social life. It was in that year for the first time, I found the means of approaching the study of religion sociologically. It was a revelation to me. The course of 1895 marks a line of demarcation in the development of my thought; so much so, that all my previous researches had to be taken up again with renewed efforts in order to be placed in harmony with these new views . . . [He attributes the change] to the studies of religious history I had just undertaken, and notably to the reading of the works of Robertson Smith and his school.[50]

The extent of the change which this signified was indeed large, and there are many ways in which elements can be discovered in Durkheim's life which point to a feeling of religiosity in him in spite of his declared agnosticism. Alpert refers to him as regarding friendship as a "sacred trust," and one which was violated quite often in the deaths of many close associates.[51] One of his disciples testified that Durkheim "gave his hearers the impression that they had before them the prophet of a nascent religion."[52] Among the many memoirs of his friends who noted in him the marks of a religious temperament is the comment he flipped off one day in passing the cathedral of Notre Dame: "There is the sort of chair I should have held."[53] Although these do point to a receptiveness in Durkheim toward the religious elements in life, they can support but little weight in trying to maintain that he was heavily influenced by religious factors in his background. Any real consideration of this thesis must be based on a detailed investigation of Durkheim's view of religion and the use of it in his sociology.

To understand Durkheim's use of the word "religion" and the reality of religion in his sociology it is necessary to begin with the heart of his definition: "A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things."[54] The feeling of sacredness, the religious force which is at the heart of Durkheim's view of religion "is only the sentiment inspired by the group in its members, but projected outside of the consciousnesses that experience them, and objectified."[55] The sacred is always seen as a non-utilitarian type of object or force which commands respect and yet is seen as desirable. Significantly, "sacredness and morality are closely related" so that "reason . . . sees in moral reality a sacred quality."[56] As was indicated above the sacred arises out of the group or society just as do moral values, and both have the qualities also of obligation and desirability.

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[49] Robert N. Bellah, "Durkheim and History," in Robert A. Nisbet, *Emile Durkheim* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 166.

[50] Emile Durkheim, "Lettres au Directeur de la *Revue Neo-scolastique*," *Revue Neo-scolastique* XIV (1907), p. 613; cited in Alpert, p. 67.

[51] Alpert, p. 21.

[52] Peyre, p. 11.

[53] Richter, p. 178.

[54] *Elementary Forms*, p. 47.

A further insight into this definition of religion is found through pursuing what was above called the "sentiment" of the group. This idea is related directly to Durkheim's view of the "collective consciousness," an idea first spelled out in some length in *The Division of Labor in Society*: "The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a social group form a definite system which has its own life."[57] "The strongest collective sentiments . . . are those concerned with the group itself . . . . Hence the exceptional authority of religious sentiments and the severe penalties that ensured respect for them, the sacred things being but the symbol of the collective entity."[58] "The gods are no other than collective forces personified and hypostasized in material form."[59] In the end, therefore, religion becomes another expression of the basic structure of society fulfilling basic needs and maintaining proper order.

The reality of religion consists in the fact that it does faithfully represent the society of which it is the symbol. "Before all, it is a system of ideas with which the individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members."[60] For example, "the Biblical legend only puts in mythical form the misery and laborious effort involved in the long struggle humanity had to make to transcend its initial stupor."[61]

It is precisely at this point, when it has been fully shown how religion for Durkheim is based totally upon realities which are part of society itself, that the question can be raised as to how far Durkheim is merely arguing in a circle which can be interpreted with religion as both the root and expression of society's reality. Nisbet suggests, for example, that "precisely as he makes religion into a manifestation of society and its crucial phases, Durkheim makes society, in turn, depend upon a non-rational, supraindividual state of mind that can only be called religious."[62] In seeking to avoid the failures of revealed religion and its absolute form of God, Durkheim has first erected a morality which arises from society but yet on the other hand is the determinative force which constitutes society. At the same time Durkheim identifies religion through the quality of the sacred which is extremely similar to, if not really some form of, the moral reality that creates the bond in society. Although religion might be a symbolic expression of the reality that is society, it appears also that society is nothing more in essence than the moral structure upon which it is founded.

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[55] *Elementary Forms*, p. 229.

[56] "The Feeling of Obligation: The Sacred Quality of Morality," *Sociology and Philosophy*, pp. 70-71.

[57] *Division of Labor*, p. 84.

[58] Emile Durkheim, *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, trans. Cornelia Brookfield (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1957), p. 111.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

[60] *Elementary Forms*, p. 225.

[61] *Moral Education*, p. 181.

Apart from the deeper philosophical problems raised by the above paragraph (which of course lend further credence to the general thesis of this paper) there is the striking manner in which Durkheim uses religion and the religio-sacred to explain the origin of almost all forms of collective representation. Starting with the premise that "in the beginning all is religious,"[63] Durkheim constructs at one point a detailed description of how full collective life has flowered out from religion:

> Religion contains in itself, from the beginning, but in a diffused state, all the elements which in dissociating, determining and combining with each other in a thousand ways, have given birth to the diverse manifestations of the collective life. It is from myths and legends that science and poetry have separated; it is from religious ornamentation and cult ceremonies that the plastic arts have come; law and morality were born from ritual practices. One cannot understand our representation of the world, our philosophic conceptions about the soul, immortality, and life, if one doesn't know the religious beliefs which were their first form. Kinship began by being an essentially religious tie; punishment, contract, the fief, homage are transformation of sacrifice, be it expiatory, contractual, communal, honorary, and so on. At most it will be asked if economic organization is an

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[62] Nisbet, p. 88.; cf. Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory: Pure and Applied* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1949), pp. 61-62.

[63] Emile Durkheim, Review of Antonio Labriola's "Essai sur la conception matérialiste de l'histoire," *Revue Philosophique* XLIV, p. 650; cited in Alpert, p. 54.

> exception and derives from another source; although we don't think so, we will allow this question to be reserved.[64]

Although Durkheim professed to leave the question of economics open at this point, in some lectures prepared during this same period he devoted twenty-five pages to demonstrating how the institution of property arose from religion.[65] In a move that is even more outstanding in light of the philosophical trends of his day, Durkheim maintained not only that philosophy and the sciences arose from religion and that the intellect had been formed through it but also that even the categories of thought were "a product of religious thought."[66] Certainly this high valuation of religion demonstrates conclusively the impact which religion had upon Durkheim's thought.

## IV

Besides the basic "religiousness" of Durkheim's sociology of morals, and society and religion, and besides his high valuation of religion itself, there is also in Durkheim's works a strong call toward the formation of a "new religion." Durkheim identified the basic thrust of this religion in some lectures given just before the turn of the century:

> If the cult of the human person is to be the only one destined to survive, as it seems, it must be observed by the State as by the individual equally. This cult, moreover, has all that is required to take the place of the religious cults of former times. It serves quite as well as they to bring about that communion of minds and wills which is the first condition of any social life. It is just as simple for men to draw together to work for the greatness of man as it is to work to the glory of Zeus or Jehovah or Athena. The whole difference of this religion, as it affects the individual, is that the god of its devotion is closer to his worshippers. But although not far removed, he does nevertheless still transcend them.[67]

In another set of lectures given a few years later Durkheim developed this same theme from a different approach: "It is impossible to imagine . . . that morality should entirely sever its unbroken historic association with religion without ceasing to be itself . . . . Morality would no longer be morality if it had no element of religion."[68] True to his basic presuppositions Durkheim feels that this basic attitude of sacredness toward the human being must be expressed in secular terms. He succinctly summarized his viewpoint in yet a third set of lectures by saying: "One of the fundamental axioms of our morality—perhaps, even *the* fundamental axiom—is that the human being is the sacred thing par excellence. He merits the respect that the faithful of all religions reserve for their Gods."[69]

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[64] Bellah, pp. 166-167.

[65] *Professional Ethics*, pp. 145-170.

[66] *Elementary Forms*, p. 9.

[67] *Professional Ethics*, pp. 69-70.

[68] "The Feeling of Obligation: the Sacred Character of Morality," *Sociology and Philosophy*, p. 69.

This call for a new religion was in no sense the crazed wanderings of an old man, for Durkheim began to draw these same conclusions in some of his earliest works. In a fiery pamphlet written during the Dreyfus affair Durkheim demonstrated how the whole reorganization of Western society which he had outlined in *The Division of Labor in Society* demanded that a new cult of the individual be organized and propagated.[70] Similarly in *Suicide* in 1897, when he drew his conclusions about the means of reducing the rising rate of suicides, Durkheim called for a rejection of old religions and the forming of new ones, claiming that "the only viable ones will be those permitting more freedom to the right of criticism, to individual initiative, than even the most liberal Protestant sects."[71]

If somehow this extreme accent upon the individual seems totally out of line with all that has been said above concerning the primacy of society, then a few considerations need to be more accurately joined. Society, through education, internalizes in each of its members the proper desires and goals which make the moral life of the individual and that of the society as a whole properly synchronize. "Thus between society and man there can be no fundamental contradiction. The duties of a man to himself are always those of his duties to society."[72] Putting the same idea in more concise language: "Society . . . cannot do without individuals any more than these can do without society."[73]

The conclusions to this paper have been constantly drawn at the appropriate points within it. With Durkheim there is considerable difficulty in tracing quite accurately the exact sources and many of the definite influences which religion made upon the sociology which he formed. This is true first of all because of the absence of detailed material on his early life and intellectual background. In the examina-

[69] *Moral Education*, p. 107.

[70] Neyer, p. 37.

[71] Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1951), p. 375.

[72] *Division of Labor*, p. 171.

[73] *Elementary Forms*, p. 347.

tion of his use of morality and religion, however, there are several key points at which his thought shows the unmistakable influence of thought derived from specifically religious sources. In many ways he has effectively altered these religious ideas so that they are clothed in a new language and directed toward a new goal. In spite of the difficulties, the outlines of the religious influences and the content of their influence still appear quite readily.

# TRADITION AND HISTORY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL AND AMERICA

BY DAVID W. WILLS

## *PREFATORY REMARKS: THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PRESENT INQUIRY*

The penchant for drawing together the historical self-understanding of ancient Israel and the interpretation of American history, as we shall see, actually came over on the "Mayflower." Since that time, it has manifested itself in various times and places throughout our history—sometimes with real significance, sometimes not—and it is still very much with us today. A perusal of recent years' editions of the *Faith and Life* curriculum shows how often the sequence of Patriarchal period-Exodus has been presented via the analogy of Colonial period-Revolution. John Bright introduces several analogies (not always apt) from American history into his discussion of *Early Israel in Recent History Writing*; and, more subtly but no less significantly, Lyndon B. Johnson indicated how deep-rooted and unconscious this pattern has become when he set his first inaugural in a decidedly deuteronomic pattern.

Yet for all this unmistakable interplay between Americans' interpretation of the meaning of their own history and the perspectives of the Old Testament, the relation between the two has not been subjected to a thorough critical study from either perspective. Students of Old Testament may occasionally cite an analogy from United States history to illustrate a point, but they generally do not take such examples completely seriously, and therefore do not pursue them at any length. And, while American historians in going about their labors may from time to time note the "Hebraic" perspectives of the Colonial fathers or the persistent influence of Puritanism in American culture, they seldom systematically explore the question of the comparative use of theologically interpreted corporate history. Each discipline, Old Testament study and American history, quite understandably, does not regard it as its own prerogative to venture very far into the bailiwick of the other, and therefore the studies of this relation that have been made are on the whole limited in perspective and partial in results.

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While not denying that such a separation of interests is normal and generally desirable, it is the contention of this paper that the application of the "tradition-history" method to certain aspects of American history can create a useful interdisciplinary study of what is basically an interdisciplinary reality. Such a study must, of course, proceed cautiously. Tradition-history (or form-criticism) method as it has developed in biblical studies has a variety of practitioners and a substantial body of critics, each of whom might define its method and results in a slightly different fashion. Moreover, in moving from ancient Israel to modern America one not only changes the type of society (sociologically) that he is dealing with, but also moves from a situation where his evidence is only a collection of sacred books, a few inscriptions, and other miscellaneous archaeological data, to one where he is confronted by whole libraries filled with written materials which must be considered relevant. Yet—and this is perhaps the a priori intuition on which this entire effort is based and in which it is offered—because the tradition-history method is designed to unveil the process of the cultic interpretation and reinterpretation of communal history in Israel, it is also uniquely able to elucidate and clarify precisely those dimensions of American history which are most strongly in the Old Testament tradition.

That the full execution of such an enterprise as this would require the knowledge (and time) of a specialist thoroughly qualified in both biblical studies and American (and parts of European) history is obvious. Equally obvious is the fact that the present writer can pretend to neither of these qualifications, and therefore this paper can in no sense be an exhaustive presentation of the subject. What is attempted here is rather an exploratory study which, while reflecting the writer's unmistakably random background of materials, nonetheless gives shape and direction to an inquiry that can be fully developed under more fortuitous circumstances.

Finally, it is important to note that beyond the value of examining this curious relation between Israelite and American history simply "because it is there," there are other significant concerns to which such a study might well contribute. First, for the student of the Old Testament, this analysis offers a means of checking the strengths and weaknesses of the form-critical method apart from its much disputed application in biblical studies. Secondly, for the American historian, such a study offers the possibility of a deeper understanding of the inner dynamics of the growth of American culture, and a fuller explanation for such phenomena as the belief in our "manifest destiny" and our abiding sense of "world mission." Finally, for the theologian, who surely ought to be an interested third party in all this, such a project may shed some further light on the thorny question of the theological valuation of the culture in which we exist, of the historical and the proper relation of Christ and culture in the United States, and even perhaps on the yet thornier question of the meaning of "historical revelation."

With all these wider goals in mind, then, we turn to an exploratory study of a form-critical analysis of American history. This study will begin with a brief and selective survey of the tradition-history interpretation of ancient Israel, then proceed to analyze the present functioning and origin of a cultic sacred-history tradition in America, and finally conclude with a summary of the results that such an exploratory study yields.

## *I. ASPECTS OF THE TRADITION-HISTORY STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT*

The tradition-history approach to biblical studies was in large measure developed as a means of pressing beyond the limitations of literary criticism. While the results of this latter method had been significant and, to some degree, abiding, they left many problems unsolved. In particular, source criticism did not sufficiently relate the developing process of writing and editing the traditions to the ongoing life of the Israelite tribes, other than by a rather dogmatic application of a theory of an evolutionary religious development.[1] Form criticism, on the contrary, sought to examine especially the smaller units of tradition in terms of the relation between their various forms in the literature and their changing functions in the life of the people.[2] The picture which has emerged from this study is, on the whole, more dynamic and variegated than that which the older method usually produced.

Because of this vitality and complexity, it is impossible even to summarize the whole interpretative *schema* which has emerged in the writings of the leading exponents of this method. Rather, for the purposes of this study, we shall confine ourselves to certain crucial aspects of their presentation, particularly their treatment of the development of the liturgical calendar and their portrayal of the shaping of Israel's earliest traditions. It must be remembered throughout, however, that we are herein exploring only a part of the relevant material.

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[1] For a critical survey of the best of the more recent products of literary criticism, see John Bright, *Early Israel In Recent History Writing* (London: SCM Press, 1956), pp. 19-26. Hereinafter cited as J. Bright, *Early Israel.*

[2] For a brief summary of the new situation created by the thoroughgoing application of form-critical methods to the Old Testament, see Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* Vol. 1 (Munich, 1957); English translation by D. M. G. Stalker (New York, 1962) pp. 3-6. Hereinafter cited as G. von Rad, *O.T. Theology.*

## *A. THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR: IMPLICATIONS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT*

The application of tradition-history method to the Old Testament has resulted in (and perhaps is in turn in part dependent upon) a renewed stress upon the worship life of ancient Israel. When the question of function is put to many of the fragments in Old Testament literature, the most plausible answer in most instances is found through reference to the cultic life of the Israelite people. Indeed, the whole interpretative *schema* built up by form criticism is in large measure an analysis of what happens to tribal traditions over the course of decades—even centuries—when they are maintained primarily in the worship life of a people whose political and sociological organization is undergoing constant revision. Because of this emphasis, it is first of all necessary to study the nature and development of the Israelite liturgical calendar.

In its mature form,[3] this liturgical calendar revolved around three main pilgrimage feasts: the Feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread; the Feast of Weeks (harvest); and the Feast of Booths (ingathering). The first, held in the spring, was ostensibly a commemoration of the tenth plague which Yahweh visited upon Egypt and the consequent flight of the Hebrew slaves.[4] It was to be celebrated by each family, who were to kill a lamb at twilight, sprinkle its blood on the doorposts, feast on it that night with unleavened bread, and continue to eat only bread that was unleavened for the following week. The second, the Feast of Weeks, occurred fifty days later, around the time when the wheat harvest was usually completed. The celebration of this joyful feast was marked particularly by the offering of two loaves of leavened bread, baked with new flour. The entire celebration was eventually related to Yahweh's giving of the Covenant at Sinai.[5] The third and gayest feast was that of Booths or Tabernacles. It was held in autumn, around the days of the ingathering, and generally lasted an entire week. There were great celebrations and processions in which the newly gathered fruit was carried, while for the duration of the week, families would stay in huts of branches built in Jerusalem specially for the occasion, to remind them, it was said, how Israel had dwelt in huts after the flight from Egypt. Thus, each of these great feasts, in one way or another, was regarded as having its origin in the great formative event in the nation's history, the Exodus, and each was seen as being in essence a celebration of a part of Yahweh's great goodness as shown in that event.

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[3] The word "mature" is carefully chosen. It refers generally to the time of the late monarchy and/or early post-Exilic period in Judah, depending on one's dating of the "sources" D and P. It is designed to allow for the discussion of the earlier traditions in their near final form without requiring an analysis of the later feasts, e.g., The Day of Atonement. My main source for this section is Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (1957); English translation by John McHugh (New York, 1961) pp. 568-575, and 484-506. Hereinafter cited as R. De Vaux, *Israel*. Also class notes from Princeton Theological Seminary course 1432 "Studies in Deuteronomy," J. F. Armstrong, Fall 1964.

[4] See Exodus 12 for the definitive Old Testament "account of its nature and origin."

If this liturgical calendar and the rationale which accompanies it are accepted at face value, the general portrayal of Israel's historical development as it is given in the Old Testament—particularly in the Pentateuch—must also be regarded as basically accurate, for the two are bound inseparably together. The tradition-history method, however, shows on the basis of the biblical materials themselves that such an evaluation is unjustified. By examining the various strata of tradition with an eye for change, one soon discovers that whereas the later passages, as summarized above, suggest that feasts resulted from the historical events as they are recorded, in reality the events were recorded as they were because of circumstances created by the prior existence of the feasts. Let us turn then, briefly, to such a survey.

There are a number of passages in the Old Testament which might be considered as "religious calendars." De Vaux lists Exodus 23: 14-17, Exodus 34:18-23, Deuteronomy 16:1-17, Leviticus 23 (itself containing two strata), Ezekiel 45:18-25, and Numbers 28-29, in that chronological sequence.[6] The pattern summarized above is already present in Leviticus 23:4-8, 16-21a, 34b-38, which De Vaux isolates as the earliest strata in the chapter and as part of the original law of Holiness, which in turn he dates in the latest years of the monarchy.[7] While there is a further development of this calendar in the other parts of Leviticus 23 and in Numbers 28-29, what is of concern to us here is primarily the prior alterations in the cycle.

[5] See Exodus 19 and R. De Vaux, *Israel,* pp. 494-495.

[6] R. De Vaux, *Israel,* pp. 470-473.

[7] Many other scholars would argue that this material too is Post-Exilic.

By moving one step back to Deuteronomy 16, we find a liturgical year which is somewhat less sharply defined than it later was. First of all, the timing of the feasts was much more imprecise. The Passover was set for the month of Abib (Israel was still on the old Canaanite calendar) but the day was not set as it later was (the 14th or 15th). The Feast of Weeks is to be held fifty days after the less fixed "time you first put the sickle to the standing grain" (Deut. 16:9b) rather than a set Passover time. Likewise, the Feast of Booths is set for the time when "you make your ingathering from your threshing floor and your wine press" rather than a definite day of the month. Secondly, there is a special point made of the importance of going to the central shrine at Jerusalem for all these feasts, an emphasis which is characteristic of Deuteronomy throughout. Finally, De Vaux argues that the linking of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is partly contradictory in detail, for in Deuteronomy 16:7 the people are told to return home after the first night, while in 16:8b they are expected still to be in Jerusalem seven days later for a solemn assembly.[8] Thus, there is compared to the later passages a general lack of precision and perhaps the hint of an even deeper disparity.[9]

This hint becomes an unmistakable fact in the older sources of Exodus 34:18-23 (J) and Exodus 23:14-17 (E). Here, the Feast of Unleavened Bread appears on the calendar in the month of Abib, and the feasts of harvest and ingathering also appear in recognizable form, but Passover is not even mentioned (except in one apparently unrelated verse, Exod. 34:25). Yet if Passover and Unleavened Bread were feasts locked in an inseparable unity by the events of the Exodus, as later materials suggest, how would this be possible? Surely, it would not.

This leaves the alternative and more likely hypothesis that these two were not actually one in origin, but grew together only after the Passover was centralized in Jerusalem by the deuteronomic reform.[10] Then, since the two occurred at the same time, it was inevitable that they be coordinated. This later unity was then read back into the early history by the P writings. In truth, however, the Passover was probably an ancient nomadic feast, a "spring-time sacrifice of a young animal in order to secure fecundity and prosperity for the flock,"[11] while the Feast of Unleavened Bread was an agricultural celebration which marked the beginning of the barley harvest. The former may well be rooted in the practices of Israel's nomadic ancestors,[12] while the latter surely was a long standing part of the cultural heritage of Canaan. This is the original divergence which is hidden by the unification in later tradition.

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[8] This idea, however, was not endorsed in course 1432, nor is it mentioned in the exegesis of Deuteronomy by G. Ernest Wright in George Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. II (New York, 1953), pp. 432-434. Hereinafter cited as G. E. Wright, *IB Deuteronomy*.

[9] A slight difference in cooking regulations between D and P, for instance, was noted in course 1432 and also in G. E. Wright, *IB Deuteronomy*, p. 434.

[10] R. De Vaux, *Israel*, pp. 488, 491-492.

Yet that later unity must by no means be regarded as an artificial contrivance designed merely to keep the liturgical calendar in smooth working order. Rather it was an ingenious and creative expression of the dynamic power of Yahwism, which was able to absorb various alien practices and ideas while subordinating them to its own inner essence. Gerhard von Rad has written (in only a somewhat different context):

> This advance on the part of Yahweh, this seizure of spheres formerly alien to himself, this appropriating and filling out of cultic ideas belonging to a completely different cultic group—this is unquestionably the most exciting thing in the history of earlier Yahwism. . . . The result . . . is the historicizing of what were previously purely agrarian festivals, that is, the rooting of them in the saving history, the legitimation, indeed, of every ritual event on the basis of historical implantations on Yahweh's part.

Here von Rad has isolated the very essence of this assimilation process: not an undisciplined eclecticism, but a grounding of the alien traditions in the historical tradition of Yahwism, the center of which was the Exodus.

This clearly is the most significant feature of the development of the liturgical calendar which we have noted. The early JE accounts indicate the agricultural origin of all three festivals by timing them solely according to the high points of the agrarian year. But in D and the various accounts of P, the meaning of these occasions has been broadened and deepened by reinterpreting them with reference to the Exodus. Deuteronomy (in its present form at least) joins the Passover to the Feast of Unleavened Bread and relates the whole to the flight from Egypt by referring to the bread as the "bread of affliction"

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 489.

[12] But see G. von Rad, *OT Theology*, pp. 15-16 for a caution against speculating too much about the origins of the Passover.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

(Deut. 16:3). It also exhorts the faithful to give willingly at ingathering, for "You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt" (Deut. 16:12). And Leviticus gives as the purpose of the living in the booths "that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. 23:43). Thus, celebrations which were in their origin most likely orgiastic tributes to the powers of fertility were transformed into celebrations of the delivering and sustaining grace of Yahweh. This, as von Rad suggests, is indeed a most exciting fact, and it is part of the very inner dynamic of the tradition shaping process of ancient Israel. This is the basic significance of the development of the liturgical calendar.

### *B. THE EARLIEST TRADITIONS OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY*

If this pattern of the adoption and alteration of earlier and alien practices and traditions was evident in the life of Israel in the time of the later monarchy when there probably existed already a written body of common tradition which would inevitably serve as a control on any deviation or revision, then one might well suppose that such a process was operative in the less recorded and regulated early days of Israel. Indeed, this conclusion has proved irresistible to the leading exponents of the tradition-history method, and has in fact become the main theme of their analysis of the earliest traditions of Israel's history.

This is quite clearly evident in one of the most significant works which this school has produced, Martin Noth's great *The History of Israel*. Noth is so thoroughly convinced that one must interpret tradition in the light of cult, and not vice versa, that he refuses to consider anything before the birth of the Twelve Clan League as being genuinely part of "the history of Israel."[14] Whatever purports to recount the history of earlier times must be related to the political and religious dynamics of the Amphictyonic League and considered as part of the sacred tradition of that league, a tradition which, as it is finally embodied in the Pentateuch contains five basic themes: Exodus from Egypt, Entrance into the Promised Land, Promise to the Patriarchs, Wilderness Wandering, and Revelation on Sinai.

Each of these themes appears in the Pentateuch as part of a unified whole which consists of all five plus certain other diverse elements. But just as the apparent unity of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread proved on closer examination to be the product of later circumstance and theological insight, so too, it seems, the unity of these earlier traditions is the result of a long process of rearrangement and reinterpretation. In their origin, according to Noth, these traditions not only were not linked with one another, but they also were not even one with themselves. Rather, each of the five blocks represents a synthesis of originally divergent materials, which were drawn together only through the outworking of a complex set of circumstances.

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[14] Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (English translation of the second edition; New York, 1960), pp. 5-6. Hereinafter cited as M. Noth, *History*.

While all five of these themes certainly would merit study, the two which are most controversial—and those for which the best case can be made[15]—are the Patriarchs and Sinai. The former is especially important because it is essential to the defense of the whole portrait of early Israel which Noth and others make. If the patriarchal materials are an originally unified whole, then all the stress upon them beginning with the Tribal League (about 1200 B.C.) is unnecessary and misleading and the *Sitz im Leben* for most of the form critical analysis that has been done must be reconstructed. The independent origins of the Sinai traditions is important both because it was such a prominent feature in the article by von Rad which launched the entire present tradition-history movement in Old Testament studies and also because one's explanation of the roots of the Israelite legal literature is such a large part of his analysis of the whole Old Testament. Both themes, therefore, require a brief consideration here.

The patriarchal narratives as we have them are centered on three figures, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are portrayed as being related to one another as members of a genealogical chain. A close analysis of this structure of family relations, however, raises questions as to its origin. There are significant points of difference between the stories of Abraham and Isaac on the one hand and those about Jacob on the other. Particularly important is the difference in geographical locale. While the stories of the former are almost exclusively related to the southern part of Palestine, those connected with the latter occur primarily in the central and northern areas of the land. Furthermore, even within the system of tales about each of the patriarchs individually, there seem to be quite striking differences as to texture and purpose. Do the Lot stories, for example, really blend in with the other legends about Abraham? Or does the set of tales about Laban and Jacob truly fit with the other parts of the Jacob cycle? All these ques-

[15] An observation made by John Bright, *Early Israel*, p. 43.

tions and others like them suggest that the unity between the various incidents which comprise the patriarchal narratives often appears to have been imposed on the materials at a later time and for reasons different from those of the original tales themselves.

That this was in fact the case is defended by Noth through an elaboration of what he conceives to be the real roots of the patriarchal stories and their subsequent unity.[16] According to his interpretation, there were many nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes moving into the sparsely populated areas of Palestine during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries. The religion of these tribes was usually focused on a god who was reputed to have appeared to some ancestor of the tribe and to have promised him descendants who would one day hold their own land. As these tribes began to settle in Canaan, their own cultic practices gradually gravitated toward the already existing shrines of the land, such as those of Bethel, Shechem, Beer-sheba and Mamre. There they maintained many of the older practices but substituted their own "god of the father" for the local deity. The synthesizing process completed itself when the theophanies which had been previously associated with the cultic site were transferred to the tribal ancestors.

The next stage in the shaping of the tradition occurred as these tribes gradually became affiliated with one another. The traditions of the shrines which became the cultic centers for the larger groups of tribes gradually absorbed or displaced the traditions of the lesser sites. The figure of Jacob, which was basic in the cult at Shechem, was especially dominant in central Palestine and, as his place as the father of the twelve tribes attests, in the Twelve Tribe League when it emerged. Only Abraham and (to a much lesser extent) Isaac in the south managed to retain their autonomy, and the stories surrounding them were finally tied in with the Jacob cycles by the artificial device of a genealogical relation. Finally, this whole pattern was in turn given an enduring place in the life and tradition of the League through a connection of the theme of promise with the traditions of the Exodus and the Entrance into the Promised Land.

Thus, once more we see miscellaneous and alien traditions unified through their absorption into and subordination to Yahwism. The patriarchal stories are used to give an added perspective to early Israel's historical self-understanding. As Noth puts it:

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[16] This discussion of the patriarchal material is drawn primarily from M. Noth, *History*, pp. 121-127 and J. Bright, *Early Israel*, pp. 43-50.

> . . . the entry of the tradition of the patriarchs into the faith of the Israelite confederation of the twelve tribes made a substantial contribution to the development of the theological explanation of the divine action which had led Israel to its present position in history, a people of God in the land which its God had given to it.[17]

Clearly, the same process which we saw at work shaping and reshaping the liturgical calendar also was responsible for the development of Israel's patriarchal traditions.

A further example of this process, according to those writers, may be seen in the assimilation of the Sinai tradition into the mainstream of Yahwism which was centered on the Exodus. Here too one begins with two things which were closely bound together in the later strata of tradition, but which upon careful analysis seem to reveal themselves as originating from disparate sources. The careful analysis was, in this case, first carried out by von Rad.[18] He began by noting that certain brief synopses of salvation-history which occur in the Old Testament seem to be liturgical in character, to belong to a species of cultic confession in which the themes of Exodus and Conquest were invoked. Classic examples of these confessions he found in Deuteronomy 6, Deuteronomy 26 and Joshua 24, where the mighty acts of God in delivering the people from bondage and bringing them into a good land were recalled and praised. Other, more free and less fixed, versions of this same pattern could, he maintained, be discerned throughout the entire Old Testament (e.g., Psalm 136). Yet in all these, he contended, mention of Sinai was conspicuous by its absence. Even in passages such as Deuteronomy 6, where emphasis on the law surrounds the material under consideration, the Sinai tradition is not present. Since no other reasonable explanation of this circumstance has been advanced, he argued, one could only assume that these traditions were in fact originally distinct.

This distinction, he then proceeded to explain, was rooted in the fact that each tradition was tied to a separate cultic situation. The Sinai tradition was reciprocally related to the Covenant-renewal feast at Shechem, at which time the tribes declared their continued allegiance to the League by once more agreeing to the law. The Exodus-Conquest tradition was grounded instead in a wholly different feast which is related to the Feast of Weeks and was celebrated at Gilgal. The two traditions continued their parallel but separate existences until the Yahwist, in a brilliant creative theological effort, built the Sinai tradition into the already highly developed Exodus-Conquest tradition and so achieved a unity of law and gospel in ancient Israel. This unified framework was thus read back into the older, originally separate traditions.

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[17] M. Noth, *History*, p. 127.

[18] The following discussion of von Rad's 1938 article on "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch" is based upon a personal synopsis-translation put at my disposal by Gary W. Martin.

While von Rad has been faulted for an excessive emphasis upon the role of the Yahwist[19] his basic argument still retains much of its persuasiveness. Taken together with the other materials we have reviewed, it rounds out the general picture of Israelite history and tradition presented by the form-critical scholars. Throughout, the emphasis is laid upon the dynamic nature of tradition and its continual readjustment to the political, sociological and religious realities of the life of the people to which it belongs, and more specifically upon the capacity of the Exodus tradition of one small group to absorb and reshape the many other traditions with which it came in contact. This is the interpretative pattern which must be related to the traditions of American history.

## *II. CEREMONY, TRADITION AND HISTORICAL REINTERPRETATION IN AMERICA*

As was previously noted, there are certain obvious and significant differences between studying the historical traditions of ancient Israel and those of the United States. First of all, the union of the Israelite tribes was characterized even at its weakest moment by a certain primitive homogeneity which no modern industrial society is capable of matching. Secondly, there has existed for a large part of our national life the "scientific" discipline of historical studies, which analyzes and interprets history from a perspective unthinkable to the ancient Israelite. Thirdly, whereas in the study of Israel one works exclusively with a fixed body of documents and a small amount of other literary and archaeological material, in analyzing the history and historical traditions of America he must select his data from a body of literature so vast as nearly to deny understanding and classification.

Working in the context of these circumstances, an exploratory study such as this cannot really develop even a selective treatment which could adequately be compared with the form-critical analysis of the Old Testament. The last factor cited above particularly militates against anything which would resemble a thorough discussion. Nonetheless, we can investigate the idea of a developing "liturgical calendar" in America and cite at least a few examples of the dynamic at work in the shaping and reshaping of the historical traditions of America.

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[19] See John Bright, *Early Israel*, pp. 40-42, for a summary of Noth's sympathetic revision of von Rad's thesis. For a much more sharply critical analysis, see Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development* (Fourth edition; Göttingen, 1957); English translation by D. M. Barton (New York, 1961) pp. 81-99.

### *A. THE CEREMONIAL CALENDAR: IMPLICATIONS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT*

By applying the basic theories of anthropology to the life of the contemporary United States, the American sociologist W. Lloyd Warner has found that just as more primitive societies order their lives around some type of a ceremonial calendar, so modern America annually celebrates a "round of holidays and holy days, partly sacred and partly secular, but more sacred than secular" which consists basically of Christmas, Thanksgiving, Memorial Day and July Fourth.[20] According to his analysis, these are days "which allow Americans to express common sentiments about themselves and share their feelings with others on set days pre-established by the society for this very purpose."[21] Indeed, this ceremonial "calendar" functions to draw all people together to emphasize their similarities and common heritage; to minimize their differences; and to contribute to their thinking, feeling, and acting alike."[22]

It is this theme of the unity expressed through the ceremonial calendar which Warner elaborates in his classic treatment of the typical Memorial Day celebration.[23] Throughout the course of the activities leading up to and including the Day itself, ethnic and religious differences which in other times and circumstances serve to divide and alienate people are transcended through the common reverence of all groups for those among their ranks who have in past years fought and died for their nation and its democratic way of life. Especially in the figure of Lincoln, who is seen as having given his life for his country in the midst of her greatest trial, all Americans find a symbol of that voluntary sacrifice of self for the sake of the national group which is exalted on this day to the place of *summum bonum.* Indeed, this unity in and through a common devotion to country is dramatized by the development of the celebration itself, which begins months before with the varied groups meeting and working in their diverse times and places and culminates on the day itself with all such groups brought together at one time in one place for the great parade and final official ceremony at the cemetery. Thus, both the literature and the liturgy of Memorial Day celebrate the allegiance of all Americans to their nation and its way of life.

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[20] W. Lloyd Warner, *American Life* (Chicago, 1953: Revised ed. 1962), p. 7. Hereinafter cited as W. L. Warner, *American Life*. I had no acquaintance with Warner's ideas when the present study was undertaken, though they are, quite clearly, developed in a pattern very similar to my own. There is, however, a significant difference between the approach of tradition-history and that of cultural anthropology. The former allows more room for diversity and development, while the latter tends more toward a uniform and static interpretation. I have elsewhere dealt with and criticized this latter element in Warner's method (in a paper submitted in Princeton Theological Seminary course 2481, "Religion and Society," Spring term 1965 to Dr. Samuel Blizzard on "Religion in America").

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[23] In chapter one of his *American Life*, from which the material in this paragraph is drawn.

Yet, just as the feasts of ancient Israel were presented in the later tradition in such a way as to mask earlier conflicts and disunities, so Memorial Day celebrations in modern America reflect little of that day's original function in national life. Memorial Day was first celebrated in the North after the Civil War, and was a day for the commemoration of the Union dead only. An examination of the rhetoric of the first Memorial Day speakers would probably reveal a historical perspective in which the North alone appeared as the bearer of the true democratic faith. Indeed, a Yankee bias still creeps into Memorial Day celebrations in the North.[24] Moreover, the invocation of the spirit of Lincoln would likewise in those days have elicited definitely sectional feelings. It has only been since the two world wars and the nationalizing of the Lincoln symbol[25] that Memorial Day has become part of the ceremonial calendar of the South. Thus, we find in the changing function of Memorial Day in American society, and in the relation of this change to certain developments in the Lincoln-Civil War tradition, a general parallel to the process which we discerned in the worship and tradition of ancient Israel.

Beyond these similarities, and perhaps even more important, is the fact that the inner dynamic of the process of unification was in each case basically the same: The disparate and in part contradictory traditions of some groups were absorbed and transformed by the dominant traditions of other groups. In the United States, it is the basically Northern tradition of America as the land of egalitarian democracy which has subordinated the Confederate aristocratic tradition (and others) to itself. In the celebration of Memorial Day, it is this Yankee tradition, rooted in the origins of the day, which dominates, but through the focus upon Lincoln (whose compassionate attitude and opposition to Reconstruction make him acceptable) the Southerner's hostility is mellowed, and through the emphasis upon the common national struggle for freedom and democracy during the two world wars, his fervor is aroused and he is included within the sacred community. Thus, a unity of tradition is achieved through a process which certainly bears a striking resemblance to the growth of tradition in ancient Israel.

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[24] See quotation from a Memorial Day speech, *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[25] Warner has a shrewd analysis of the development and function of the Lincoln symbol, *Ibid.*, pp. 19-23.

Moreover, this similarity is by no means to be found in the Memorial Day celebration alone. It is, if anything, even more noticeably present in the long history of the celebration of Thanksgiving, and in the historical traditions which have grouped themselves (in the "popular mind") around that occasion. Because its own origins reach back to the very dawn of American history and the tradition which it bears has to do with the very foundations of our country, this great American ceremony commands our especial attention.

The development of this ceremony—and perhaps of the entire American ceremonial calendar—must be understood in the context of the rejection of the church year by the Puritan fathers.[26] The men who founded the New England Colonies were for the most part schooled in the tradition of those English churchmen who had become wearied by the heavy annual round of prescribed religious fast and feast days and horrified by the manner in which the disdain with which these days were widely regarded was being extended to the very Sabbath itself. In order to rescue that holy day from the abuse into which it had fallen, these men were eventually compelled to reject not only the multitude of saints' days, but even the very "feasts of Christ," including Christmas. This extreme position was brought to America by nearly all of the early leaders of New England!

Yet however determined they were to keep the Sabbath holy, the Puritans like all other peoples of the earth found it impossible to live without designating certain other days as extraordinarily special also. However, rather than depending on the certainty of the annual calendar, they looked instead to the unpredictable providence of God, i.e., they designated certain days of fasts or feasts only as the historical circumstances in which they found themselves seemed to require. Since these days were to be selected primarily by the leaders of the civil state, this pattern of ordering the ceremonial calendar made it almost inevitable that American holy days would be centered on the realities of the political order as interpreted in a theological light.

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[26] See W. DeLoss Love, Jr., *The East and Thanksgiving Days of New England* (Boston, 1895), pp. 11-39. Hereinafter cited as W. D. Love, *Days of NE.*

Indeed, this combination of the political and the theological in the context of the ceremonial is nowhere more apparent than in the celebration of the "first Thanksgiving" in Plymouth.[27] That small colony of English Separatists was thrown into crisis in the early autumn of 1621 when a small party which had been sent out on a mission up the rocky coast returned with enthusiastic reports about the Massachusetts Bay area. Many of the colonists, unhappy with Plymouth's shallow harbor and the memory of that first bitter winter which they had spent there, began to wonder if they might not do well to move on to this apparently preferable site further up the coast. Governor Bradford, however, realized that such an attempt at relocation would be disastrous, for it could only lead to a re-enactment of that first terrible winter when nearly half of the colonists had died. He therefore resolved to act to stem the tide of dissatisfaction with Plymouth.

Taking advantage of the harvest season, he declared a week set aside for feasting and thanksgiving to God for the bounties his people were enjoying in the new world. In a fashion that is now known to every American schoolchild, the Pilgrims celebrated the occasion by feasting on turkey and fraternizing with the friendly Indians of the area. The whole occasion was a huge success, and when it had concluded, most of the colonists were ready to agree with Bradford that "The Lord, who assigns to all men the bounds of their habitation, had apoynted it [Massachusetts Bay] for an other use."[28]

It is interesting also in this connection to note the sources of this first "Thanksgiving." On the one hand, Bradford was obviously drawing upon the old English tradition of the "harvest home" festival, which was simply a celebration of the produce of the land. On the other, he was perhaps influenced by his eleven years spent among the

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[27] See *Ibid.*, pp. 68-77 and a very fine article in *This Week* magazine, November 22, 1964, pp. 7-17, by Thomas J. Fleming on "An American Feast." Fleming evidently draws both from Love and from Bradford himself for his discussion of the Pilgrim feast.

[28] Cited by T. Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

Dutch in Leyden, where he had become accustomed to that city's annual Day of Thanksgiving for the deliverance of the city from the Spaniards in 1574.[29] By combining the two, he created an occasion which had the joyfulness of the first, and the political and religious significance of the latter, and was quite in harmony with the developing Puritan tradition of the specially designed fast and feast days.

The significance of this occasion and the tradition to which it has given rise can scarcely be exaggerated. What Bradford had done was to normatize one interpretation of the community's history, i.e., that its coming to Plymouth had been wise and good and wholly within the providence of God, by building it into an impressive and popular feast day. Since the whole of New England was settled by men who regarded their entire enterprise as an "errand into the wilderness" for the Kingdom of God, the creation of a ceremonial *Sitz im Leben* which could nourish and sustain this historical tradition of divine mission was no small event in American history. Much as the cultic recollection of God's promises to the patriarchs shaped the historical self-understanding of ancient Israel, the celebration of Thanksgiving in America has shaped our own attitude toward who we are as a nation.

That this comparison is valid is further witnessed to by the process by which Thanksgiving became one of our four main holidays. Because of the "occasional" nature of all Puritan feasts, Bradford's autumn festival did not immediately become a yearly affair even in Plymouth, much less in the far more significant Massachusetts Bay colony. It was, in fact, the officials of the Connecticut colony who evidently first placed it on an annual basis, around 1649.[30] Thereafter its celebration became increasingly regular in Plymouth and also Massachusetts, where, however, the occasion was usually much more solemn. In all New England, the "occasional" fast and feast days, as well as an annual spring fast, continued to be observed as well.

The relatively rapid adoption of this annual autumn thanksgiving throughout New England was not matched by the other colonies. This was no accidental product of trivial differences in customs, but resulted instead from the fact that this celebration, as we have noted, was very much bound up with that section's perspectives on colonial and later national history. During the Revolution, when the spirit of co-operation was relatively strong and the seeds of later American nationalism were being planted, the Continental Congress followed the now old custom of setting fast and feast days. The first national Thanksgiving was set on December 18, 1777, to celebrate Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, and thereafter such celebrations were called for every autumn or early winter from 1777 to 1784. After the successful conclusion of the war, when the short-lived period of co-operation ended, the setting of all such days was returned to the states.[31]

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[30] W. D. Love, *Days of NE*, p. 246.

With the resumption of power by a centralized authority which followed upon the adoption of the Constitution, the question of a national Thanksgiving was once again raised. On September 25, 1789, a resolution was introduced in the House calling for a day of Thanksgiving especially for the Constitution itself. It was passed by Congress and signed by Washington, but only over strong anti-Federalist opposition which was powerful enough to prevent the New Englanders from going on to press for the national adoption of their own annual feast. As the power of this anti-Federalism grew stronger, the frequency of special national days declined. In the early nineteenth century, only July Fourth and Washington's birthday, which were clearly not the exclusive property of any state or section, were celebrated as national holidays. The dissatisfaction with this arrangement which was prevalent among the New England "theocrats,"[32] who feared the secularization of national life, was a symptom of the general alienation of that section from the life of the nation during those years, an alienation which culminated in the secessionist Hartford Convention.

In the political "era of good feeling" which followed the War of 1812, New England was gradually brought back into the mainstream of national life, and concurrently many states of the union began to appoint an annual Thanksgiving Day of their own. Yet despite the propaganda efforts of Sara Josepha Hale[33] and others, a national day was not established until the Civil War, the same national calamity in which Memorial Day was born. Lincoln called for a day of thanksgiving in the summer of 1863 to celebrate the victory at Gettysburg, and again in November of that year in accordance with the long standing practice of most Northern states. This autumn thanksgiving feast was held again in November of 1864 and uninterrupted for the hundred years since. The Pilgrim feast day has become a universally assumed and accepted part of American life. For our purposes, the most significant feature of this long development is the interrelationship of the rise of Thanksgiving to the status of a national holiday and the growing dominance of New England and its Midwestern offshoots in the shaping of American life and tradition. It was the same Civil War which marked the triumph of Northern political and economic power which also permanently fixed the place of New England's key feast on the national ceremonial calendar. Through the celebration of that day, the historical tradition of these northern "tribes" has been mediated to the whole nation, so that Americans of widely diverse religious and national origin can sing with fervor and loyalty "land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrims' pride . . . of thee I sing."

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[31] For a discussion of national thanksgiving and fast days during the Revolutionary era, see W. D. Love, *Days of NE*, pp. 399-404.

[32] See John R. Bodo, *The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues 1818-1848* (Princeton, 1954), pp. 37-38.

[33] See Thomas J. Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

### B. TENSIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEW ENGLAND TRADITION

As in ancient Israel the traditions which emerged as central in the worship and literature of the tribal union had themselves undergone alteration in their rise to dominance, so in America the originally New England theme of national mission under God, which has become so prominent throughout our national traditions, has undergone significant transformation. Basically, the original theocratic conception of the holy city which guided the founders of Massachusetts and Connecticut has been changed to the egalitarian-democratic idea of America the land of freedom and diversity. The inner relations between these two concepts, from the standpoint of intellectual history, are significant and complex, but they are not of immediate concern to us here. What we do need to note, however, is that the historical traditions of the Puritan period have been readjusted in later times to correspond with an altered understanding of the meaning of America. Ideally, this could be done through a detailed treatment of the literature and liturgy of Thanksgiving celebrations throughout American history. But though the mass of the relevant material makes that examination here impossible, an indication of the nature of the process with which we are concerned can be derived from W. Lloyd Warner's analysis of "Yankee City's" celebration of the Massachusetts tercentenary.[34]

To celebrate its three hundredth anniversary, this New England city held five days of "historic processions, and parades, to games, religious ceremonies, sermons and speeches by the great and near great."[35] The climactic event was a grand historic procession in which forty-two specific incidents from the town's past history were presented in tableau fashion by certain local civic and religious groups. The subjects of these dramatic scenes were selected by a special tercentenary committee, and brief historical sketches regarding each were run in the local paper in the months before the procession itself. According to Warner, the whole process was a secular rite in which "the people of the community unknowingly revealed their non-rational, unconscious feelings and beliefs about themselves."[36]

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[34] "Yankee City" is the name Warner used for the New England town in which he conducted extensive studies. The material here under consideration is drawn from his *The Family of God* (New Haven, 1959, Paperback, 1961), pp. 89-154.

One of the most important things they revealed was the ambiguity of their relation to the city's Founding Fathers, to whose honor much of the celebration was ostensibly directed. This was most clearly apparent in the function of "villains" in the forty-two historical tableaux. First, it is important to note who the villains were not. They were "no longer the hated Redcoats . . . who, by historical account, sometimes threw the city's inhabitants into a state of hysteria. There was no scene depicting the 'Boston Massacre,' so popular in earlier community celebrations."[37] Second, they were not the Indians, in spite of the "bloody history in which Yankee City spent her men and money."[38] Thirdly, no villainry was "found in the once despised and greatly feared French whose Catholic 'idolatry' was considered 'an abomination' by the Puritan iconoclasts."[39] Finally, the Spanish and German enemies of later American wars were not presented as the villains.

The real villains were figures whose identity was partially masked. For example, in the fourth scene of the procession, the tableau represented an incident in 1663 when John Emery and his wife were called before the magistrates for having received and entertained two Quakers. The written story of this float explained the scene thus:

> Just for this act of kindness some stupid persons of the town had him

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 93. Warner asserts the essentially symbolic nature of the whole celebration in spite of the stress which its directors placed on the historical accuracy of the scenes presented. His own treatment of the place of historical scholarship in the planning and execution of such an occasion is most illuminating. Basically, he contends that the high priests of "science" are called in simply to lend credibility and persuasive power to signs which are selected on other less rational grounds. See pp. 100-104.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

> taken before the court where he was actually fined, because at that time Quakers were not allowed to stay in the colony. Nevertheless, John Emery refused to say he was sorry, although he was obliged to pay the fine. He and others like him kept refusing to obey such cruel orders and after a time most people came to think as he did, and the Quakers were left in peace.[40]

In this scene, the hero is clearly Emery and the villains are the magistrates, representatives of the town's founders and their philosophy. Nor is this exceptional, for these figures are likewise cast as villains in a scene recalling the period of the witchcraft trials.

A further dimension of the status of the town's founders in the later tradition was evidenced by the float which dramatized the settling of the city in 1635. Even though in nearly all the other scenes the names of the figures involved were given on placards and discussed in the text, the founders and their families remained anonymous, even though the river where they landed bears the name of the main leader and though this man himself gave the city its present name. The reason for this rather odd procedure seems to rest in the fact that the founder, the Reverend Thomas Parker, was an aggressive theocrat whose opinions were no longer respected and who indeed was indirectly represented as the villain in the scene of John Emery and the Quakers. While the early Indians who had endangered the community's life were presented in sympathetic fashion, Parker's symbolic function in the procession, according to Warner, was that of "an anonymous sign on which contemporary hostilities are projected and by which derogatory meanings are evoked."[41]

The concluding float in the section of the procession devoted to the Early Fathers very aptly summarized the whole relation of the earlier traditions to the present community. It followed immediately upon the scene of the witchcraft trial and showed Judge Samuel Sewell, a famous Puritan who had participated in those trials, making public confession of his repentance. Its deepest symbolic import seems to be that the values and perspectives of the Fathers are acceptable only in partial form, that they can maintain their position of respect only when the error of guilt of much of their conduct is publicly acknowledged.[42]

The necessity for this rejection of much of the community's earliest tradition can be found in the tercentenary committee's statement of

[40] Given in *Ibid.*, p. 129.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

the purpose of the whole celebration: "establishing understanding among our own citizens of diverse racial origins and points of view and demonstrat[ing] their relationship and importance to community progress."[43] Because the United States was from the beginning a pluralistic society, it was impossible long to maintain the earlier ideas of uniformity and intolerance which were so much a part of earliest New England. Therefore, the tradition of the Puritans has had to be seriously altered in order to maintain its place in American life.

Basically, the vitality of much of the early tradition was preserved by shifting the emphasis from the Massachusetts Bay Fathers, who represented the right-wing of Puritanism, to the Plymouth Separatists, the early Quakers, Roger Williams, *et al.* who belonged to the Puritan left. This adjustment allowed the traditional theme of America the Land of Liberty to be read back into the early history and so combined with the Puritan theme of America the Chosen People of God. It is this unified tradition which clusters around the celebration of Thanksgiving, a celebration, be it remembered, which is focused on the *Pilgrims*. When school children are initiated into the mysteries of this cult in the week before its annual occurrence, they are not taught about the stern Fathers of the Bible Commonwealth, but of the humble band of Pilgrims fleeing from the religious persecution of the Old World. Thus, the forces of oppression are banished to Europe, and the average schoolchild is left with an understanding of the settlement of New England which is in perfect harmony with

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountain-side
Let freedom ring.

* * *

Our fathers' God, to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.

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[43] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

It is the tradition of these words, the combined tradition of America the Chosen People and the Land of Liberty, which through the Civil War established itself as the dominant theme in American "sacred-history," and still is a powerful force in the life of this nation today.[44]

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR BIBLICAL STUDY, AMERICAN HISTORY, AND THEOLOGY

That the study which is here presented is fragmentary and incomplete has been maintained throughout. Obviously, the most that has been accomplished is a tentative exploration of the topic at hand and some suggestions as to the manner in which it best may be pursued further. Nevertheless, it does seem that even such a limited analysis as this has partially substantiated the intuitive rationale on the basis of which the project was undertaken, i.e., that there is a similarity sufficiently great to merit careful evaluation. Moreover, certain provisional implications may be drawn for each of the three areas mentioned in the introduction.

First, in the realm of biblical studies, this project would seem to suggest that whatever the limitations of the tradition-history approach may be, it is certainly not (as some suppose) preposterous. We have found concrete examples of the historical traditions of America behaving in accordance with some of the patterns derived from Israelite traditions. Most striking of these, perhaps, is the emergence of the relatively minor early tradition of dissent in New England as the normative (or at least preferable) pattern for the later picture of the Founding Fathers. While a thorough analysis of the literature and patterns of ceremony which have in the past developed around our holidays would be required for a really adequate testing of the methods of form criticism, such instances as those cited do suggest that such a study would do more to enhance tradition-history than to discredit it.

Secondly, for American historians, this study implies that in the process of assimilating the many groups of immigrants who have come to this land, there has been a significant and dynamic readjustment of the nation's historical self-understanding to the changing social realities. That such a continual alteration proved necessary further suggests that such matters as the symbolic meaning of a nation's historical traditions are of genuine importance to a people, and therefore also to any scholars who would seek to understand them. There can be no adequate history of America which does not include a consideration of America's own changing understanding of itself and its historical traditions.

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[44] Another theme which is nearly as important as these and which is also closely bound up with Thanksgiving is America the Bountiful Land. It is, however, generally dealt with as a corollary to the two themes mentioned in the body of the paper. Still, a good case could be made for the contention that Thanksgiving and Christmas together are our one central national ceremonial event and that its substance is nothing more than a revelling in our affluence.

Finally, for the theologian, this study raises the question of how much theology in America should be an interpretation of national historical traditions, or even historical tradition itself. If the form-critical analysis of the traditions of Israel is correct, then to speak of God's revelation of himself "in history" is to refer to a very complex phenomenon the center of which from a human standpoint is the coming of a people (personally and corporately) to the proper historical self-understanding. Since the interpretation of history and tradition in America appears to be fundamentally what it was in ancient Israel, and since (we can assume) we are dealing with the same God, does it not seem that the task of our theology in its prophetic mode is to allow itself to be lead by the Word and Spirit to a proper interpretation of the history of those secular communities in which we find ourselves? That this is not the whole of theology is obvious—the church has its own history too—but it does seem that there is an important theological task to be done here that is being attended to neither by those American liberals who uncritically accept our historical traditions as they stand nor by those of a more neo-orthodox persuasion who regard secular history as uniformly devoid of theological content.

While the conclusions in all these areas are quite tentative and must be treated cautiously, the general thesis which has emerged from this study so far is clear: The application of the tradition-history approach to the historical traditions of America not only demonstrates its own general validity, but reveals to Americans the necessity of understanding their traditions to understand themselves, and, to those so minded, the necessity of evaluating and reshaping those traditions theologically if they are to know truly, before God, who they are.

# "GO UP, TAKE POSSESSION"

## BY BURTON A. KNUDSEN

> Behold, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has told you; do not fear or be dismayed . . . Do not be in dread or afraid of them. The Lord your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God bore you, as a man bears his son, in all the way that you went before you came to this place (Deut. 1:21; 29-31).

Seniors, in a little over a month you and I are going to be kicked out of the nest—caps, gowns, and B.D. hoods flapping. That some of us will break the fall by doing graduate study—for reasons right or wrong —does not change the fact that a critical point in time has come for us, beyond which lies a new and different phase in our lives.

I suppose that there is some truth in the recent *Viewpoint* article, "Happiness Is Being a Seminary Senior." Happiness there is indeed as a long and difficult task comes to an end and as that ministry for which we have been training comes into view. But I detect another rather strong emotion among us—anxiety. The anxiety I am talking about is not the one concerned with getting a church or getting the right one, though that anxiety too is prevalent. The anxiety I am talking about is worrying about what will happen and what will threaten in that church or other ecclesiastical position wherever it may be.

This anxiety may be detected in the noticeable last-minute scurry to pull everything together into a neat and workable system—theologically, methodologically, and personally. Perhaps it should also be noted in passing that this same anxiety may in fact be at the root of some of the senior "coasting" which we see, as one deals with the anxiety by a kind of withdrawal rather than by feverish activity.

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Two years ago a Senior remarked somewhat loftily to some of us Juniors in a seminar which he shared with us that the difference between Juniors and Seniors was that Juniors were always trying to take things apart while Seniors, because of what lay ahead of them, were trying to put things together. With some contempt for what we regarded as a lack of critical courage and some desire for vengeance because of the implied superiority, we gave that Senior a box of Tinkertoys at the end of the course as a farewell gift so that he would have something to put together. We would probably be more sympathetic today.

In thinking about our situation and anxiety as Seniors, it came to me that in the figure of Israel poised on the borders of the promised land there is a word of God for us.

I will place the following verses from the first chapter of Deuteronomy before you: "Behold, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has told you; do not fear or be dismayed" (1:21). And when the people are afraid to face the inhabitants of the land, Moses speaks further, "Do not be in dread or afraid of them. The Lord your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God bore you, as a man bears his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place" (1:29-31).

I submit the following points for consideration: (1) We are standing upon the borders of our ministry; (2) we are commanded to possess our ministry; (3) we take possession through God's power.

We who now stand upon the borders of our ministry have come a long way. All of us have experienced something of the reality of deliverance from Egypt as God called us from our former ways, intentions, and occupations. For some of us the ten plagues recounted in the Bible seem but pale shadows of the ingenuity and power that was brought to bear upon us personally before the Pharaoh in us would let the Israel in us go. At length a defeated Pharaoh, a tentatively responding faith, and an impelling call of God worked together to bring us through the waters that forever separated us from our former place.

But suddenly you and I found ourselves in a wilderness. The old securities were gone. No maps charted the way. No highways lay clear before us. The sustenance needed for this kind of life appeared to be scarce and uncertain. Even when sustenance came, we learned that manna collected yesterday could not be used today. Refreshing water for our souls came gushing forth from the most unlikely looking rocks, but there were long dry periods between gushes. Thus were we schooled in dependence and trust upon our God. Sometimes in this process we were chastened. We complained of the manna we were getting in seminary, and lo! three curriculums fell upon us, and we chewed away at them until we were ill.

We had fears and doubts along the way. We wondered where we were going, and, in any event, whether we should be going there. There were times in seminary and previously when we longed for the fleshpots of our former life—on the farm, in the office, in the laboratory. Still we kept on our way, following a guidance which sometimes seemed as intangible as a cloud. Oh, we had our little Sinais of the soul too when God spoke to us, and we somehow knew that it was he who spoke and we who listened. In quaking fear we gained new insight into who we were and where we were going as he traced with his finger his word upon our hearts.

But such rich moments were often soon forgotten as we made for ourselves gods of doctrines and ideas and theologies and exegetical principles so that we might have something "secure" to hold to. Then with a righteous vengeance (sometimes a self-righteous vengeance) professors and fellow students laid hold of these gods and ground them to powder and made us drink the bitter brew they made. Once more only God was left to depend on and trust.

It is important for us to recall these things as we stand upon the borders of our ministry, for it is you and I who have been called and who have journeyed through the wilderness who stand here today. This is who we are. We have been called; we have heard God speak to us; we have been schooled in faith in the wilderness. You and I are the very ones who now behold the promised land. Now the command of the Lord comes to us: "Go up, take possession of your ministry!"

We have spied out this ministry and have learned both of its goodness and the dangers in possessing it. It is that ministry which God in calling us promised us. It is the bringing of good news to a world which has heard very little good news. It is the proclaiming that God loves all men and in that love has given himself to the fullest. It is the telling of the good tidings that in Jesus Christ the powers of sin and death have been defeated and that in the glory of his resurrection and present power he leads all the captives into freedom. God's forgiving love has triumphed, and men's lives may now be full and free and joyful. In such a world as ours how beautiful indeed are the feet of him who brings such tidings!

We have discovered that there are great obstacles and forces within us, which will oppose us. I will name only a few: the self-righteousness which spurns God's costly mercy; the malice which poisons human relations and life itself; the despair which frowns in the face of hope; the irresponsibility which fritters away the bounty of creation; the pride which slashes at all which stands in its way. All these and more find flesh and blood in us and in others and seek to prevent us from possessing our ministry. In the face of these we may indeed feel like grasshoppers. These are the very forces which the gospel itself seeks to conquer. Overcoming them and possessing our ministry are really one and the same.

The command to possess our ministry is the call for total engagement with those gigantic forces which oppose it. In total engagement the terms are unconditional surrender. We are so to lay hold of our ministry that it and we become one. If it fails, we fail, for through us the gospel is brought to bear against the opposing powers. Thus we are commanded to risk who we are in that close and personal engagement. The danger is that we will be overcome and become nothing. Who is it that could command such a thing of us? It is the Lord our God who called us, spoke with us, and brought us through the wilderness. He who has thus created us and called us and shaped us is the same God who so commands us to possess our ministry.

Indeed, it is only through God's power that we can possess our ministry. This is both a warning and an assurance. Out of fear of their opponents the Israelites refused to obey God's command to possess the land. God then ordered them back into the wilderness. Contrary to this order they decided to enter anyway, but because God was not now with them in this enterprise they were disastrously defeated and driven back into the isolation of that wilderness where they spent the next forty years.

Note that to refuse to enter the land at all means to retreat to the wilderness behind, where once there was a necessary and creative experience but which now represents opportunity lost and a barren fulfillment. Note too that the same fate lies in store for those who would presume to enter the land on their own. The message to you and me is that we possess our ministry on God's terms or not at all, because it is only through his power that it can be possessed.

This means first of all that we may not hold ourselves back from the fray by hiding behind such things as the Princeton B.D., Brunner's theology, or Brown, Driver, and Briggs' Hebrew lexicon. You and I as we are now are commanded to risk ourselves, not just our theologies.

It means also that we are not to trust in any of the expertise that we may have learned here or elsewhere. Important as that expertise may be to one's ministry, it must not be the object of trust. To try to possess one's ministry apart from trust in God is to spend forty years in the wilderness merely accumulating credit for the pension fund, though one has the biggest church in Christendom. It was to teach this lesson of trust that Jesus first sent his disciples out without purse or bag or sandals. Only when they had learned this lesson did he tell them to utilize all that they had. The point is that the instrument, no matter how useful, must not be reckoned as God. Possessing our ministry on God's terms may sometimes mean that we have to do things which seem every bit as foolish as marching seven times around Jericho—perhaps like marching from Selma to Montgomery —but it is God's way or not at all.

So much for the warning. There is also assurance in the fact that it is only through God's power that we possess our ministry. We do not need to be anxious or afraid. We do not need to scurry around seeking what we can find to protect ourselves against the coming battle. God says to us: "Do not be in dread or afraid of them. The Lord your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God bore you, as a man bears his sons, in all the way that you went until you came to this place (Deut. 1:29-31).

"Behold, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has told you; do not fear or be dismayed" (Deut. 1:21).

## ABOUT THE COVER

The Byzantine-inspired double eagle which has become DIMENSION's cover symbol has a long and mysterious history. A single eagle is a more familiar Christian symbol, representing not only St. John the Evangelist, but in some circles baptism, the Ascension of Christ, and the Last Judgment. The double eagle (actually a double-headed eagle) appears most commonly in the Byzantine Empire as an emperor's symbol, suggesting the combination of cross and crown in the single figure of the divinely favored ruler. It was used on coins and tapestries, and as architectural ornamentation. Double eagles can still today be found adorning Greek Orthodox churches, especially in the monasteries of Mt. Athos.

The history of the double eagle before Byzantine times is nearly lost. Specimens have been found in architectural remains of the Hittite kingdoms, leading to speculation that it was introduced into Byzantium and Europe by crusaders returning from Turkey and the Holy Land. Another intriguing theory associates the Roman Janus, two-headed god of beginnings, with the Christian single eagle, which also has to do with the new beginnings of baptism, ascension, and judgment.

DIMENSION's double eagle symbolizes above all the theologian working in two "dimensions," the church and the secular world. It represents academic theology and practical ministry, not as separate, but as two aspects of the same ministry, two perspectives on the saving work of Jesus Christ, two dimensions of the minister's life as a man called by God to be his servant.

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